

Shooting at weddings is a dangerous business

Window
on
Jordan

By Star Staff Writer
THIS SUMMER authorities all over the Kingdom are starting early. For probably the first time they have embarked on a concerted action. What I am talking about here is trying to put an end to firing pistols during wedding parties.

These happy gunmen, it seems, are especially active during the summer, when they start firing in the air as a way of expressing their enthusiasm during celebrations.

Quite frequently, people get killed or injured because of stray bullets zipping back and forth in the heat of the moment. In past years countless people have died during weddings, turning joyous occasions into terrible tragedies.

But nobody really seemed to care—or even to take much notice, despite the increases over the years of weddings, accidents and, sadly, heartaches. The idea of "shooting in the air" seems to be an ingrained phenomena embedded in the psyche of people, and with which they seem prepared to live.

This spring the mood seems to have changed. Mayors from all over the country have brought together the elders of different clans in their respective regions, and asked them to sign what can only be called a "code of conduct," that in effect limits the use of firearms during wedding parties.

The elders did agree that shooting during wedding

ceremonies is uncivilized, and that something must be done to stop the accidents that occur far too often at these affairs. What is of real interest here is seeing how these tribal elders would put their promises into action, and convince the rest of their clans, or their young peers, not to pack their pistols when they are invited to a wedding.

Although elders in Wadi Al Sir and Al Salt promised that their tribes would refrain from such behavior, people are saying among themselves that it is easier said than done and that they will have to see it to believe it. They won't have long to wait.

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The Star

Jordan's political, economic
and cultural weekly

Le Jourdain
Supplément en français du Star

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

Meeting of King, PAs breaks down barriers, heralds era of dialogue

By Raed Al Abed

Star Staff Writer
HIS MAJESTY King Hussein paved the way this week for a national dialogue with the different popular sectors in the country, when he met with the leaders of the Professional Associations. The meeting put an end to a chapter of tensions and the creation of a new era based on mutual respect and understanding between the government and the civic institutions.

The unscheduled visit on Monday of the King to the Professional Associations Complex is seen as a step to cement national unity and enable Jordanians to face upcoming challenges, both on the local and regional levels.

The King surprised the meeting of the leaders of the PAs, who gathered last Monday to draw their agenda for a future meeting with the King.

In the two-hour visit, King Hussein and the Association leaders talked freely. "It was an opportunity for a constructive dialogue," said Husni Abu Ghaida, head of the 13-member Council of Presidents of the PAs.

He described the King's visit as "a historic meeting" based on "an ethic of dialogue" which, he said, should govern relations between the government and the unions.

The Council of Presidents petitioned the King to release Leith Shbeilat, former head of the Engineers Association, who just began serving a nine-month sentence for inciting riots in the city of Ma'an earlier in the year. The King immediately responded and ordered Shbeilat's release.

Most PA presidents expressed optimism on the future role of the associations, especially since the King gave them the confidence and support for their independence, ending a decade of acrimony with the government.

"His Majesty promised us that our issues will be of special concern to him," said Ahmad Al Qaderh, president of the Dentists Association.

The Jordan Press Association (JPA) also presented its case to the King. Seif Al Sharif, JPA president, said he talked with His Majesty about the issues that concern the press body.

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The core issue is press freedom, and the JPA's participation in the drawing up of the new press draft law.

"His Majesty expressed his understanding and ordered the participation of the PA in the drawing of the law, which is currently in process," Sharif said.

He also petitioned the King to pardon the journalists who are presently standing before the courts.

The sticking point has always been a battle of wills between the PAs and the government. Observers say that the latter sought to control the associations by drafting laws to make their membership voluntary rather than mandatory.

On their side, the PAs want

ed the government to hasten the adoption of laws which the general assemblies of the PAs had called for and the government had rejected.

The King said that no laws will be imposed on the associations, and the talk about the draft law relating to saving funds of the PAs and others no longer exists.

While the King praised the role of the associations in the country, at the same time he affirmed that they should concentrate on their professional side, as stipulated by their laws, in elevating the standards of their respective professions.

The PAs, whose membership is about 100,000, has been traditionally dominated by Islamists and a minority of leftists.

and served as a thorn in the side of governments in past decades.

The government has attempted a number of times to control the activities of the associations, but failed because of protests of PA memberships.

The associations adopted a hardline stance in opposing the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace accord and enjoy warm ties with Iraq today.

Joining the Islamic-led opposition parties, the PAs boycotted last year's parliamentary elections in November. The PAs also joined the opposition in their call for a national dialogue with government, but this failed to materialize.

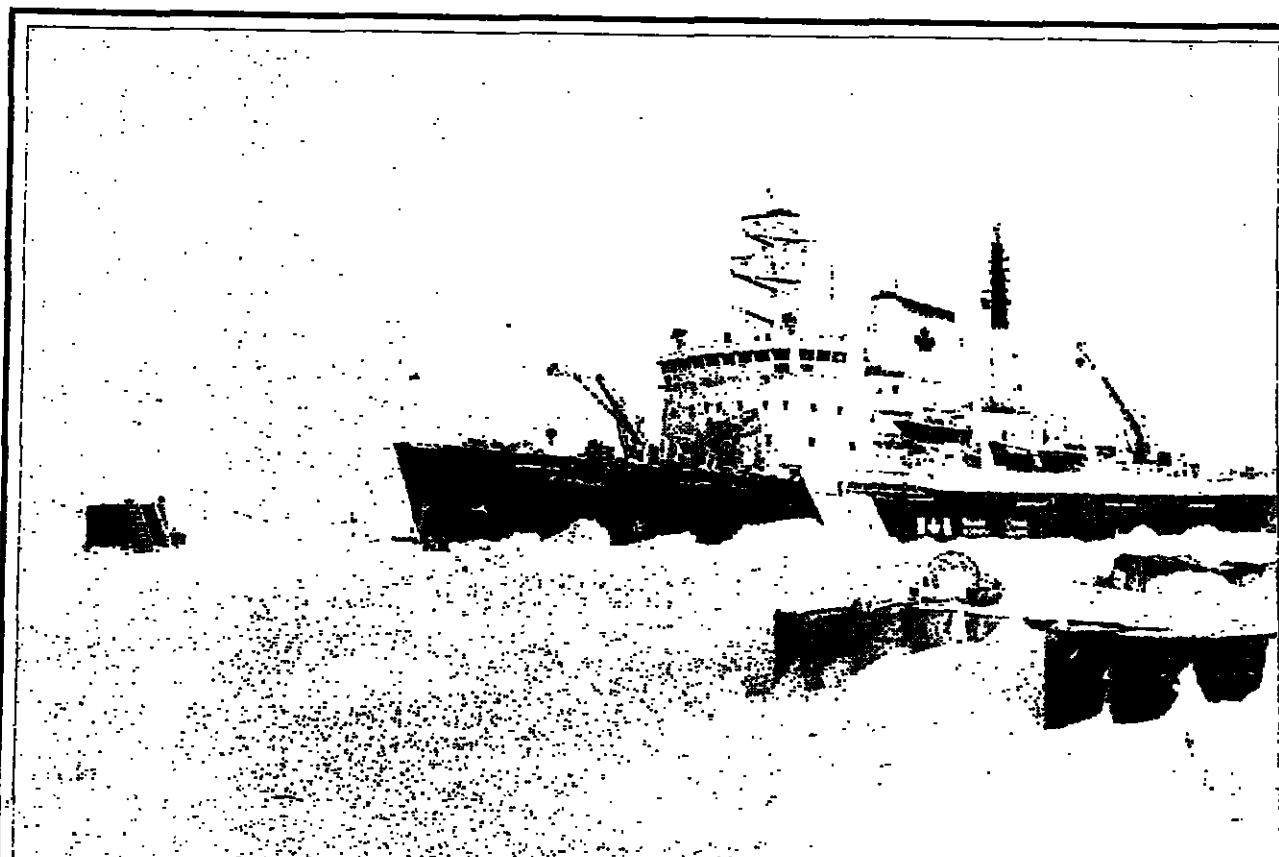
Political analysts are saying that the King's visit is opening a new chapter in the relation between the government and the civic institutions, whose backbone is the Professional Associations.

But there is also the regional situation to consider. In light of its own peace treaty with Israel, Jordan is deeply disturbed over the continuing stalemate in the peace process which the Kingdom is playing, a key role in trying to revive.

This may be why the door to national reconciliation is being so widely opened. Analysts see Jordan as sandwiched between two trouble-spots, Israel and Iraq, and that is why it needs to present a strong united front.

On the home front, His Majesty called for serious and constructive action, and for confidence in the future, as well as for dealing with reality with awareness and responsibility, far from lessening the great accomplishments the Kingdom and its people have achieved despite the poor resources.

The King on Monday told reporters that his surprise visit to the PAs Complex was based on information he read in the daily press. On Tuesday, Abu Ghaida announced that the Council of Presidents would be meeting today, Thursday, to prepare for the upcoming second visit of King Hussein to the Complex, which Abu Ghaida expects to be a festive event. Thus far, the visit has not been scheduled.



Ice Station Sheba, housed in an icebound Canadian icebreaker, serves as headquarters to scientists studying the Arctic's role in Earth's climate. photo from Washington Post

End of heartache for returnees!

By Iham Sadeq

Star Staff Writer
AN ELDERLY woman has just come downstairs from the makeshift headquarters of the Returnees Compensation Center (RCC), signs of anger and distress are all over her face.

Leaning against the wall, Umm Sammer said "I've been waiting here since the early morning. And now, after long hours under the sun, the man who is in charge of checking documents has refused my papers, saying they are incomplete."

"Can you believe it, I must go again back to my house in Mafruj and bring the papers. Is this fair?"

She wasn't the only one. Other returnees who had come from faraway places said that they frequently have to leave work and come to the center to inquire about their compensations.

One of them, incredulously said that since coming to Jordan in 1990 he has spent about 400 dinars on newspapers to see if his name is included on any returnees' lists for compensation.

But the same applies to most of the other returnees who flocked to the Kingdom

in the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1990.

Since their arrival in Jordan, almost all of the 400,000 returnees from Kuwait and other Gulf states have been coming to the center and the Ministry of Labor. At one stage they even thought that their cases had been forgotten. Out of frustration they sometimes put the blame on the government, the distribution center itself or the United Nations' Compensation Commission (UNCC).

And their pent-up anger increases as they hear rumors of other returnees in Egypt and Syria who have already received their compensation in full. But Yahia Al Uteibi, RCC general secretary strongly denies the rumors, saying that they are "baseless."

According to UNCC instructions, payments for returnees' claims in their different categories are systematically delivered to the states concerned, regardless of their nationality.

"So far the UNCC has sent payments covering claims of the 'A' and 'C' categories at a rate of \$2,500 for returnees in all countries," Al Uteibi states.

But there is an elaborate process to all this, and a very



Group awaiting compensation at Returnees Center

tedious one claimants argue. There are six categories:

'A' is for families or individual returnees who left the Gulf after the War; 'B' is for fatal injuries or death; 'C' is for workers who were forced to leave their job during the war or soon afterwards; 'D' is

for losses exceeding \$100,000, including individual business losses; 'E' is for corporations and 'F' is for international organizations and governments.

But for returnees impatient

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Ethnic minorities live and work in Chinese 'zoos'

By Sarah Murray

IN A dark interior, the dim light filtering through wooden shutters reveals a spartan room furnished with silk wall hangings and low-slung chairs. One corner contains a young Tibetan dressed traditionally and in solemn contemplation. Possibly to assist in this, he has placed one of his fingers an impressive way up his left nostril.

I retreat in haste—such an occupation is surely best carried out alone—and find myself back in the bright sunlight of the courtyard outside.

I am still reeling slightly—we have spent the morning in Shenzhen, the Chinese metropolis bordering Hong Kong, on a "down-town" tour that takes in such scenic wonders as the Nanhai Oil Develop-

ment Zone, the Shenzhen Customs Supervision Zone and vast construction sites where signs explain that "Time is money and efficiency is life." And now we are in Tibet, complete with prayer wheels, golden bells and a real Tibetan.

A few meters away, a group of tribesmen sits in a yurt, the felt tent that is their home high on the grasslands of Inner Mongolia; further off, women busily embroider a tribal skirt in the Jinpo Village and over at Huizhou Street, men indulge in a game of chess.

This is China Folk Culture Villages, one of a growing array of ambitious theme parks springing up across the People's Republic. In this bizarre human zoo, living examples of 21 of China's 56 ethnic

minorities can be seen in houses representing their various styles of architecture in a park built on about 180,000 square metres of prime Shenzhen land.

There, surrounded by skyscrapers and the distant hum of the special economic zone, about 300 people—ethnic minorities and a handful of Han Chinese in costume—live and work.

It must be a strange life, but perhaps it is not an unpleasant one. The daily routine appears to consist of sitting around in national dress and, when sufficient numbers of tourists have gathered round your hut, leaping up to weave something, sing a folk song or play a traditional instrument.

It seems the pay is not bad either. "I earn enough money here to help support my entire village," says a Bai girl from the remote southwestern province of Yunnan.

As well as the live exhibits in their life-sized houses, attractions include a copy of the Cangyuan cliff paintings, a statue of the thousand-handed and thousand-eyed Guanyin and something intriguingly described as the "Laser Folk Music Fountains." Eating and shopping are part of the equation, so a food hall provides a selection of ethnic delicacies, while wooden huts stock craft objects, paintings and a generous supply of film.

Spoilt by choice, I stop at a signpost to contemplate my next move. It indicates a tempting range of possibilities, some more familiar than others—Wa Village, Nanfeng Pagoda, Tujia Overwater Market, Toilet. I opt for the Wa Village and am glad to have done so for the Wa people seem to be having a really good time. They are dancing and

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World
Report



On the occasion of the
INDEPENDENCE DAY

Arab Bank is honoured to convey to

HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN

and to the People of Jordan

its most cordial wishes and greetings

ARAB BANK

Energy resources seen as bridge between nations Oil and diplomacy conference

AMMAN (PETRA)—His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said that Jordan has worked to build regional peace and that the Kingdom is fully aware that progress and prosperity are an illusion in the absence of peace. Thus, he said, it is necessary for each party to be given their right.

His Highness noted that Arab oil exporting countries are using oil as a bridge to arrive in the post-oil era which could possibly be reached by the second half of the 21st century.

The remarks came in a speech delivered on his behalf by Upper House Speaker Zeid Rifai at the opening session of a conference entitled "Arab Oil and Diplomacy: Toward the 21st Century."

Prince Hassan called on Arab oil countries to accelerate their efforts to upgrade and diversify their natural and human resources.

The Crown Prince said that the entire Arab world should overcome their differences through dialogue and quiet diplomacy. He also said they should concentrate on joint needs and realize their economic and social development through cooperation among themselves and with neighboring regions.

The Prince said that oil and diplomatic resources can play a significant role in this transitional stage. He added that if such a comprehensive development policy is adopted and associated with effective and successful foreign diplomacy as well as domestic public participation, oil resources will become more important for the Arab world in the future than they have been during this century.

The Crown Prince noted that oil and oil diplomacy will have an important role to play in improving ties with friendly countries in Asia and Africa as well as with traditional partners in Europe.

"There is an urgent need to adapt, with requirements of the European-



Arab partnership and the pressing effect of globalization in trade, finance and data, technology," he said.

His Highness said that Arab oil and diplomacy have to head towards Southeast Asia with the aim of building more balanced international economic and political ties.

The Crown Prince noted that realizing peace, security and stability must come first. He said that Jordan suffered more than others as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict and regional disputes like the second Gulf War.

"The Jordanian government therefore, called for the establishment of a dispute settlement center to be founded on a regional code of conduct in which all concerned countries shall take part and form the basis for institutionalized regional cooperation," Prince Hassan added.

He pointed out that Jordan, despite

its limited resources, has built a number of organizations with the goal of encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding.

Prince Hassan said the Al Ahsat Foundation, the Royal Academy for Islamic Research and Studies together with the Arab Thought Forum aim at promoting freedom of thought and drawing up joint concepts for growth issues in the region, taking into account international changes around us and positively interacting with them.

President of the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy Kamel Abu Jaber also delivered a speech in which he said that oil and energy have become—promise to continue to be—the most important ingredients in contemporary civilization.

"While the search for alternative sources of energy continues in earnest, the fact remains that, at least for the time being, none has proven viable," he added.

Abu Jaber pointed out that we have recently been witnessing a number of parallel developments which touch upon the strategic importance of Arab oil and, indeed, add up to a change in the Arab world order. "These changes must be analyzed from a fresh perspective and then given their due significance," he noted.

Abu Jaber said that Jordan, lying between oil rich lands on the one hand, and Israel, with its western out-reach on the other, remains strongly affected by various currents in the region.

He said that Jordan has always been more than a buffer, and that its interest in the prosperity and the stability of the entire region continues to be a high priority. In light of this, he noted that the Kingdom is always in pursuit of a policy in which oil will never be a cause for conflict between nations. Oil, said Abu Jaber, must be a bridge for cooperation among nations, rather than a dividing factor between them. ■

Shooting at weddings is a dangerous business

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Starting in mid-June weddings really start to swing into action, in both towns and countryside. And people who continue to feel apprehensive, not to say skeptical about the new promises, could actually be right. After all, the shooting phenomena has become a sacred tradition in Jordanian society. It is not only a mark of honor but of joy.

While the phenomenon happens most commonly at wedding parties, Jordanians do seem to have a proclivity for celebrating, and so it seems there are indeed many occasions that are deemed appropriate for getting off a few shots.

It happens frequently after the Tawjili results, when again it is an expression of joy, and probably, relief. It sometimes is nothing more than an expression of simply feeling good.

But there is a certain dangerous psychology in back of all this happiness. The guys who have the itchy trigger fingers more often than not seem to lose themselves—or at very least their common sense—while in the midst of firing. What they are aiming at—or, more accurately, what their guns happen to be pointing at when they pull the trigger—is

sometimes seems less clear to them than to practically any of the spectators.

Indeed, it is in crowded places that tragedy is most likely to happen. Putting your arm up to shoot while you are in a state of what can only be described as ecstasy, is a hazardous occupation. For someone, And it is here that joy and happiness can all too easily be turned into mishap and heartache.

The good thing about the new agreements is that finally the tribes themselves are recognizing that there is a problem and are willing to do something about it. ■

King remains confident about peace process

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cially blaming him for the protracted deadlock in the peace negotiations.

Referring to some recent demonstrations in Jordan, the King said that people should not despair, regardless of setbacks, and that expressions of feelings should take a different form. Extending help to people, for example, he said

was a viable approach, but instigations were not helpful.

The King said that the human world has been deprived of its humanity, and, in the face of this, individuals should concentrate on contributing toward building a positive future.

He also urged Jordanians to take part in decision making through awareness and dialogue, stressing

cooperation among the three authorities he was addressing, adding an assurance that Jordan was stronger than anyone could imagine.

"We in Jordan as one family," the King said, "bear neither barriers nor walls between us for preventing ideas and hinting at errors to correct things for the good of the homeland." ■

Al Quds Al Arabi gets another reprieve

AMMAN (STAR)—After the ban comes the reprieve, *Al Quds Al Arabi* is back on the streets in Amman. No sooner had the Press and Publications Dept. (PPD) issued strict orders not to allow the daily into Jordan, than a quick reversal followed.

Acting Information Minister Nasser Al Lawzi said that the one-week ban, which was imposed last Tuesday, is now over and that a letter to that effect was sent to the London-based daily and its correspondent in Amman, Bassam Badarin, saying that the newspaper can redistribute in Jordan.

"The government decision to ban *Al Quds Al Arabi* came in response to a number of articles in the newspaper that were clearly targeting Jordan and its policies," said Al Lawzi. However, he added that both sides are now trying to solve the matter.

The initial decision to ban the daily was widely criticized locally as well as on the international level, and it is thought that this may have played a strong role in reversing the government decision.

Earlier, the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), sent a letter to Prime Minister Abdul

Salam Majali expressing "grave concern" over the ban.

The letter added that "the CPJ views the government-imposed ban on *Al Quds Al Arabi* as a flagrant violation of the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers, as guaranteed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."

Relations between the PPD and the newspaper have been strained over the last four months. The department has confiscated 37 issues of the paper, which sells between 300 and 400 copies a day in Jordan.

PPD Director Bilal Tal said the department came to its decision "after making every attempt to open dialogue with the paper's Amman bureau to ensure their commitment to 'principles of professionalism, objectivity and neutrality'."

Tal has said that *Al Quds Al Arabi*'s Amman bureau "persisted in publishing reports and analyses that went against the simplest rules of professional conduct and objectivity."

Badarin denied that his cov-

erage of Jordanian affairs was biased since, he said, only four editions of the newspaper were confiscated for stories originating from Amman. The bulk of the issues that were confiscated carried stories and articles from other sources, he said.

"I challenge anyone to come up with any story that has false information about Jordan," Badarin said earlier.

The PPD filed a case against Badarin on 16 March for allegedly "distorting the image of Jordan abroad and harming ties between Jordan and friendly countries, and insulting the country's dignity."

The charges, according to Badarin, were based on a series of 12 articles that were published several months ago and dealt with the relationship between the government and the Islamist-led opposition during and after November's parliamentary elections last year.

Last week, as the ban went into effect, the newspaper placed ads in the three local dailies informing readers that it has a website and could be read on the internet. ■

For the Record

Jordan, US hold war games

AMMAN (STAR)—The United States has launched month-long, five-fire military exercises with Jordan, involving marines and sailors of the US Navy's 5th fleet. The joint exercises—code named "Infinite Moonlight '98"—started last Thursday. A similar five-fire mock war last year, involving 500 Americans and a similar number of Jordanians, was held in Qatana, 120 kilometers south of Amman. Military sources said that the drill, held between May 14 and June 10, is intended to help raise the efficiency and skills of the Jordanian armed forces, enabling them to gain combat experience and learn about advanced military equipment. Since Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1994, Washington has donated \$300 million of military supplies, including F-16 jet fighters, tanks and helicopters to Jordan. US forces have conducted joint exercises with several Arab countries, including Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia in addition to Jordan.

King Hussein, Arafat meet
Amman (Petra)—His Majesty King Hussein and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Saturday held a meeting during which both sides reviewed the latest developments in the peace process in the light of the London meeting and the postponement of a proposed meeting in Washington.

Majesty expressed Jordan's support of the Palestinians in their endeavor to attain their rights on their national soil. In addition, King Hussein said he supports the Palestinian National Authority's efforts to complete negotiations with Israel in preparation for final status negotiations. President Arafat informed His Majesty about the negotiations taking place in Washington under the American administration's sponsorship. He also reviewed with His Majesty the situation in the West Bank as well as the demonstrations which took place there on the 50th anniversary of the 1948 War, noting that they were a result of frustration the Palestinians feel due to the current impasse in the peace process.

Swiss President in Amman
Swiss President Flavio Cotti ended a two-day visit to Jordan where he met His Majesty King Hussein and other senior officials. Cotti centered on boosting bilateral relations and the stalled Arab-Israeli peace process. Cotti, who is also his country's foreign minister, was on a regional tour that also included the Palestinian self-rule areas, where he met Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Cotti left Amman on Sunday for Israel.

Vatican diplomat statements

Amman (Petra)—A top Vatican diplomat in Amman said Monday in an interview that the Vatican is considering the establishment of a university in Amman similar to the Vatican universities in Bethlehem and Beirut. Monsignor Dominique Rezaeu, charge d'affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature in Amman stressed the Holy See's full support of His Majesty King Hussein's and HRH Crown Prince Hassan's efforts to make regional peace, promote inter-faith dialogue and safeguard human and religious rights of all groups.

Furthermore, the Vatican backs the Jordanian efforts to maintain the religious status of Jerusalem so that it be open to all believers in God. Monsignor Rezaeu said.

Monsignor Rezaeu reiterated the Vatican's total rejection of declaring Jerusalem as the capital of Israel as well as the idea of internationalizing the city for religious considerations.

"It should be for all believers in God; it should be an open city," he said.

Vatican's establishment of diplomatic ties with Israel does not mean that it condones Israeli practices in the Holy City or its regional policies," he said.

Ethnic minorities live and work in Chinese 'zoos'

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singing, even though there are no tourists in sight.

My arrival does not inhibit the proceedings. The Wu are spirited performers, although what they are playing does not sound terribly traditional—I could be mistaken, but one of their friends (or is it an over-enthusiastic tourist?) has forgotten to put on his costume. Dressed in sneakers, jeans and a bright yellow jacket, he interrupts his energetic drum solo only when a mobile phone falls out of his pocket.

Over at the cave houses of northern Shuangxi, a sign explains that these dwellings, carved out of cliffs on the loess plateau of northern China, provide natural air-conditioning—that is, if you happen to be in northern Shuangxi. Here in Shenzhen other methods are necessary, in this case an extremely loud Japanese air-conditioner prominently positioned above the door.

Throughout the park, modern inventions are put to clever use to help entertain the tourists. In the Naxi village, deprived of the hot southern sun, the occupants are using hair dryers to dry their brightly coloured brush paintings. The Uighurs of Xinjiang clearly need to take a leaf out of the Naxi book as their enthusiastic singing is being drowned out by the furious fiddling of the Mongolians, who have a huge sound system at their disposal.

When the Uighurs finally give up trying to compete with modern technology, I sit down to talk to them. In limited Mandarin, I manage to discover that they think Shenzhen a fine place.

They could be right. Back home in their mainly Moslem province, in China's far northwest, 16 people were executed in January for offences committed during a separatist uprising last year. The young Tibetan I encountered earlier could well have been among

those incarcerated by the Chinese authorities, were he not busy entertaining tour groups.

Those languishing in China's jails were apparently exercising the "wrong" type of nationalism. In the culture villages there is the "right" sort of nationalism—part of an ideology dating back to the 1980s when local costume, song and dance started to be promoted by the state.

"Be from life and yet go up on to a higher plane than life itself," is what the guide says was the philosophy behind the project. Whether or not visitors to the place feel they are on a "higher plane" is anyone's guess. But they are certainly enjoying themselves, having a go on the drums, sitting on camels or trying their hand at a bit of weaving.

The odd thing is that most of them are Han Chinese (judging by the number of times I am photographed, "foreign devils" must be in short supply on the grounds). This seems strange given that in

parts of China populated by minorities, Han show little interest in their cultures.

In Tibet, Chinese state workers have to be paid supplementary wages and given extra holidays to persuade them to move to a place many consider a barbarian wasteland. And yet here they are in Shenzhen, lining up cheerfully beside Mongolians, Uighurs and Tibetans to have their picture taken.

Before returning to the tour bus, I look in on the costume room, where examples of traditional dress are displayed. Colourful and lavishly decorated, these garments are the most visible marks of China's different ethnic groups, and have been the most sensitive political forced to don Mao suits during the Cultural Revolution. Ethnic minorities are today expected to wear their national dress at official functions.

It is time to leave. As I make my way out of the costume room, I notice that music is being piped out from muffled speakers inside the building. The song: a badly orchestrated version of "Born Free."

Financial Times Syndication

End of heartache for returnees

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for results, the wait continues to be a bitter one, regardless of their classification. Although the claims and fund distributions started Monday, many returnees have been standing in queues a week before that. Many wondered what they were waiting for, especially since payment had already been deposited in the Central Bank of each of the countries that has returnees long ago.

"At this rate I don't know whether I will receive my payment during my lifetime. Maybe it will go to my grandsons, maybe not—God only knows," murmurs a frustrated old man who watches as the queue gradually becomes longer.

The delay apparently has to do with a system of auditing and cross-checking that takes time. Uteibi said it is also related to the shortage of liquidity. "If liquidity is available, then cash will be paid, and in an organized manner." Already, the UNCC has paid the "B" category of returnees an amount totalling about \$2 million—but "B" group constitutes only about 450 returnees.

The liquidity is a result of deductions from the \$2 billion oil-for-food deal, a program concluded between the UN and Iraq in late 1996, and which is reviewed every six months.

"Thirty percent of the total Iraqi oil sales of \$2 billion is deducted upon the UNCC resolutions to cover the returnees' claims," Uteibi explained.

But this is not the end of the story. The cash is deposited in the Central Bank of Jordan, and the process of paying it out begins. Uteibi notes that "about two months ago, we received the third batch of compensations for 19,544 beneficiaries."

But the process is slow, and people often become anxious about when they might expect their money. "It's true, people don't stop ringing us inquiring or complaining, but it's not an easy task," he notes.

Enclosed with these payments are lists which the UNCC sends bearing the names of returnees, their national number and the sum they are entitled to. These are written and endorsed by the UNCC itself—the Center doesn't have the right to alter any of the data.

"All we do is compare these lists with the previous ones to avoid duplication, and audit the information enclosed," Uteibi said.

The UNCC gives countries that receive payments for returnees a year to hand them out to their beneficiaries. "We have been able to complete our mission in less time. In fact the process for dispersing compensations has already started by giving people their cheques through the Housing Bank," Uteibi noted.

A youthful returnee, who



Uteibi

has just received his cheque, said he was satisfied with the new process which he described as organized.

The UN governing council has the right to penalize any country suspected of the slightest errors in the distribution mechanism or if it is proved that the delivery of payments has ceased or even restrained by any country.

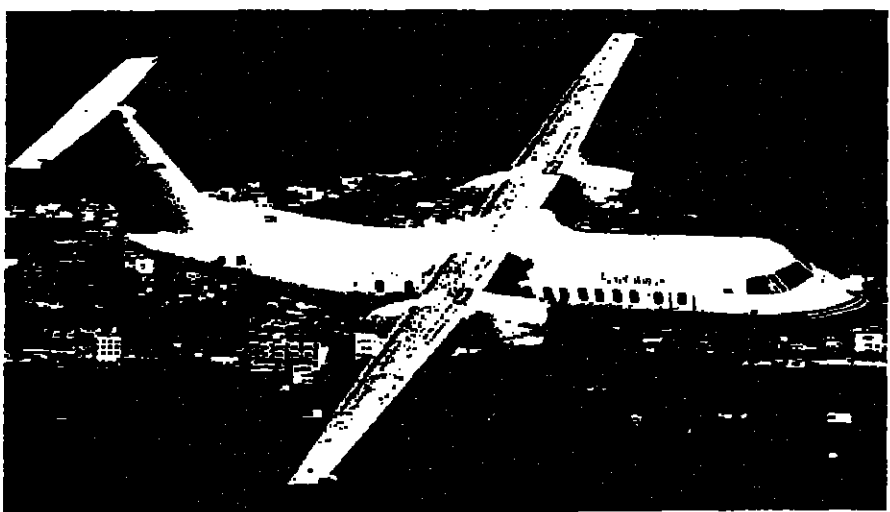
Uteibi states that the UN allows governments to deduct about 1.5 percent for claims in the "A", "B" and "C" categories and three percent in the "D", "E" and "F" ones. However as a gesture from His Majesty King Hussein, returnees were exempted from the deductions.

The number of Jordanian

returnees' claims—including all categories—is more than 111,000.

The first batch distributed was worth \$328,000, the second, about \$60 million and the third (which is presently being distributed) will come in at about \$49 million. The committee in charge of the compensation payments comprises senior officials from the Ministry of Labor, the Secretary General of the RCC, and representatives from the Audit Bureau.

This committee is affiliated with the Higher Compensation Commission, which is chaired by the Minister of Labor and the secretaries general of the Ministries of Labor, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Planning. In addition, it includes the Secretary General of the RCC, the director of the Human Resources Development Center, and five representatives from the returnees themselves. ■



Royal Wings

ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INDEPENDENCE DAY
THIRD FLIGHT TO
AQABA DAILY

ROYAL WINGS AIRLINES ANNOUNCES THAT EFFECTIVE
25TH MAY 1998, A DAILY ADDITIONAL FLIGHT TO
AQABA WILL BE OPERATED AS PER THE FOLLOWING
SCHEDULE:

DEPARTURE AMMAN (MARKA) AIRPORT AT 9:30 LOCAL TIME TO AQABA.
DEPARTURE AQABA AIRPORT AT 17:00 LOCAL TIME TO AMMAN.

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JORDAN

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report on Jordanian
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by Marwan Al Asmar

Released

■ Laith Shbeilat is to be released from prison upon the instructions of His Majesty King Hussein. The King made a special decree after an unscheduled visit Monday to the Professional Unions Council in Amman. The Unions Council petitioned the King during his surprise visit to the headquarters of the Contractors Union—where the council was in session—to pardon Shbeilat. Later, as he left the headquarters, the King said that "Shbeilat's issue is over as he is guaranteed by his brothers in the Council." Shbeilat was sentenced to nine months in prison last week after being found guilty of inciting riots in the southern town of Ma'an last February. One man was killed and several injured in the pro-Iraqi riots that swept Ma'an. As a result, the town was placed under curfew for several days. Shbeilat, a well known unionist, has been jailed twice before.

Jweideh

■ The prison population of Al Jweideh Reform and Rehabilitation Center is 1,778, according to Mohammad Al Akaleh, head of the center. He told the Chairman of the Lower House Public Freedoms Committee Mohammad Al Azaideh, that Al Jweideh has 900 extra people held in detention which is far above the normal rate as the center has only 724 beds. In addition there are 141 women prisoners in the center.

Press

■ Certain constraining articles of the Jordan Press Association (JPA) draft law which is being examined by the Lower House Legal Committee are being cancelled. These include an article that states no government authority can suspend the Association. And article 62, which gives the Minister of Information the power to form a committee headed by the director of the Press and Publications Department, along with several journalists, to take the place of the JPA has also been abolished. Under the new draft, all the powers of the Minister in dealing with the JPA has been transferred to the Council of Ministers.

Arrests

■ Six Islamists have confessed to carrying out a recent series of explosions in Amman recently. The members of the "Reform and Challenge" group have "easily confessed" according to sources in the State Security Court. Government sources have said there is a seventh member who is currently residing in the US, and who allegedly issued instructions to an eighth member of Arab nationality who is living in an unidentified country. It is said that it is he who is financing the group. The six men will be tried by a military tribunal at the State Security Court, while the other two will be tried in absentia. A security official said the group admitted to planning a small explosive device at the Modern American School last month. It exploded after midnight and no one was hurt. In addition, the group claimed responsibility for torching a car belonging to an incumbent senator and a former minister. The arrests were made after intensive campaigns by the General Intelligence Dept. to get to the bottom of the recent spate of bombings. Another Islamic group was discovered in the process, and after investigations it was thought to have ties with the "Reform and Challenge" group.

Jordan to restore Jerusalem gate

■ The government says that it will restore one of the main gates leading to Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem after it was burned by arsonists last week. Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Abdel Salam Abbad said the Al Aqsa Restoration Committee has given the go-ahead for repairs to begin immediately on the gate. The government condemned as "outrageous" last Thursday's attack on one of the main gates, the Ghawanmeh gate, which leads to Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque, and blamed the Israeli government for its destruction, saying that Israel was responsible for protecting Muslim and Christian holy places in Jerusalem.

It is believed that an Israeli extremist hurled an explosive at the gate, setting it on fire. Jordanian officials said the attack was a violation of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, which states that "Israel respects the present special role of Jordan in Muslim holy shrines in Jerusalem."

Jordan retains administrative control of the Islamic holy shrines in the city, particularly Al Aqsa Mosque. The Kingdom has spent millions of dollars to restore the holy shrine over the years. Dr. Abbad said Jordan "hoped to complete in a short time the repairs and restoration of the Ghawanmeh Gate and return it to its normal condition."

Ambassador

■ Former minister and Lower House deputy Mahomud Dawoodia has got a new post. He now becomes Jordan's new ambassador in Morocco. Also Mazen Al Armouti, Jordan's ambassador in Vienna is to take on extra responsibilities. He will now be Jordan's non-resident ambassador to Croatia. Meanwhile, Adnan Abu Adeh will take a seat in the Upper House of Parliament, an appointment made by a Royal Decree.



Abu Adeh



Rally at UJ

■ The burning of the Israeli and American flags outside the University of Jordan's main gate was the finale of a demonstration that was held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Al Nakbah, earlier this week. More than 2,000 students took part in the two-hour rally to mark the loss of Palestine. All classes were cancelled for the duration of the rally.



His Majesty King Hussein after meeting with leaders of the professional associations, Monday. (See Page 1 story for details).

Harder than ever to find the job you want, and keep it

Labor market makes job security a matter of infinite flexibility

By Ibtisam Awadat
Special to The Star

BASSAM IS a well-known wholesaler, dealing in second hand clothes (*balleh*). His friends and relatives call him *Al Muhandis*, (the engineer) since he holds a BA in engineering, but because of financial problems he has never practiced his profession. Indeed, there are stories circulating in downtown Amman about a surgeon who used to work in a modest restaurant, then suddenly disappeared. And these cases are not unique.

Today, a large number of degree certificates are just hanging on the wall. Yet parents continue to pressure their children to go to college or universities. At the very least, degrees serve as a source of pride and satisfaction for the parents.

"It was my personal wish to study engineering," said Khalid Adnan. "This certainly wasn't the case with my fellow students at the time, who were forced. But ever since graduating in 1984, I have never worked in the profession—far from it in fact."

"I am a family man, that's why income is so important. I wasn't qualified, but through practice anyone can learn," Adnan said about his current position as manager of a publishing establishment.

Experts readily admit that recently there has been a change in our concept of work, and the value we place on staying in one profession. Nowadays, people move from one profession to another far more easily than they used to. Titles and positions no longer seem to be significant considerations.

Yet, the rapidity and extent of change indicates that public awareness needs time to bring itself in line with the needs of the market.

The numbers of new graduates who annually join the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) is about 2,000. Today, the total number stands somewhere around 40,000," said Hisham Khresat, who carries out administrative tasks



at the JEA, stating that there are many examples of similar cases. However, these people still work in an engineering environment.

But a recent JEA study shows that the unemployment rate among engineers is nearly 4.8 percent.

"I hold a BA degree in Electronic Engineering from the US, but I work as a taxi driver," said Muner Hammad, who returned to Jordan after the Gulf War.

"When I came to Jordan companies offered me between JD 160 to JD 200, but there was no way I could support my family on that. That's why I bought a taxi—my monthly income now is up to JD 600," he continued.

"I studied law, then the problems started. I had to find a law practice but no one would take me, and that's why I ended up working as a typist," said Amal.

"This is the least I can do for my family—try to earn some money. After all they paid for my education. I hate the idea of being totally dependent," she added.

The Ministry of Planning is often blamed for not providing scientific studies that would

indicate the supply and demand situations in various professions—something, it is argued, that would help to reduce unemployment.

However, an official source from the Ministry told *The Star* that such studies are no longer being carried out because of a lack of funds.

Fortunately, both the Royal Scientific Society and the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST) have taken over the statistical research, and are now playing a pioneering role.

The HCST has already begun a long-range study of the job market. Entitled "A Study of National Scientific and Technological Requirements and Potentials," the second phase of the research was completed in March 1998.

The first phase of the project, finished in February 1996, covered 2,115 institutions and identified their technical problems, qualification requirements, specializations along with a wide assortment of related issues.

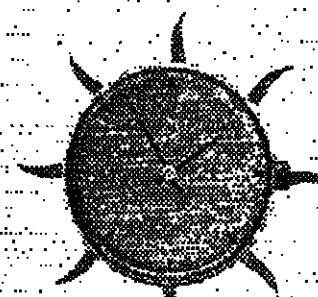
The study found that 44.4 percent of those interviewed said that graduates with scientific degrees constitute the most-needed employees. However, other interviewees had a different idea. Twenty-five percent of them said that the employees they search out are those with only a college diploma.

"This study we've done is one among many other scientific and technological projects that are being carried out by the HCST," said Issam Mustafa, assistant director of the industrial section in the Higher Council.

"The study is a team effort which will last for nearly 4 years, and whose cost has already reached JD 100,000," Mustafa said.

Indicators brought to light in the recent study compared with those of the previous one (1996) show that there is a continuous increase in the number of institutions and employees carrying out scientific and technological activities in general, and scientists and engineers working in Research and Development (R & D) in particular.

The comparison reflects that



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United, at Long Last!

Our Say...

Benefit of regional cooperation

JORDAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT that it has reached an agreement with Syria on building a JD 300 million Wihda Dam on the Yarmouk River is historic to say the least. The project, which has been on the drawing board since the 1950s, promises to help Jordan deal with its persistent water shortage. Regional developments and political sensitivities have played a major part in putting off work on this important project for decades.

The announcement, coming only few days after His Majesty King Hussein inaugurated the Karamah Dam, brings assurances that the Jordanian leadership is doing its utmost to prepare the country for the challenges brought about by development, industrialization and the constant increase in population.

The fact that the project now enjoys the backing of Syria, which also shares the waters of Yarmouk, deserves our applause. Both nations stand to gain from the fruits of the collaboration, sharing the water for drinking, as well as using it as an important energy source, both of which have always been scarce in either country. The bilateral cooperation between the two states should stand as a model for other Arab nations who share a common destiny.

It is important also that the two countries have agreed to set aside their political differences for the common good of their people. Once the project is successfully launched, it promises prosperity to the immediate area on both sides of the border.

In a region that has seen many bloody conflicts rather than peaceful cooperation, the Jordanian-Syrian example is worthy of Arab and international support and backing. Jordan's sincere efforts to finance this mammoth project must be met with equal sincerity by development banks, especially in the Arab world. Jordan has gone a long way in restructuring its economy, balancing its budget and mending fences with its neighbors. It is a country that assumes increasing importance in the region, both politically and economically.

Its stability is now a cornerstone for the stability of the entire region. The Wihda Dam project is an essential ingredient in Jordan's search for self-reliance within the framework of regional cooperation.

What is needed at this stage, in addition to providing for immediate financing for the project, is to focus attention once more on the regional water challenge as we approach the end of the millennium.

Regional cooperation is the only answer to this problem. But without a just political settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict it will be almost impossible to address the issues of water sharing and our ever decreasing water resources. Jordan has opened the way for others to follow in this regard. It has reached its own water accord with Israel and now with Syria. Surely such tangible benefits of peace are worthy of admiration and emulation. ■

Israel told to stop torture

● The Israeli human rights group B'tselem re-enacts on Tuesday methods of torture practiced by Israeli security forces on Palestinian prisoners. By showing this, B'tselem is hoping to rally Israeli public opinion against the torture of Palestinian prisoners, which it notes is "a bureaucratic and everyday practice." Amnesty International and the UN Committee Against Torture are calling on Israel to immediately stop sanctioning the use of such practices, stating that it goes against international law and conventions.



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Letters to the editor: Will be edited for brevity, must contain name and address of sender.

H-Bomb test put in moral perspective

What good will sanctions do?

By Carrie Nelle Moya
US Star correspondent

Buddha would be proud? I don't think so. But for whatever reason, known only to its powers-that-be, India tested three nuclear devices on Monday, May 11, an Indian national holiday commemorating the birth, in the latter years of the 6th century, of its supposed native son Buddha. India's first nuclear test was on the same date in 1974.

Despite the fact that there is some dispute over the exact date of Buddha's birthday, let us assume for the sake of argument that it actually is May 11. Would he not be among the last to want his birth commemorated by a show of annihilation capability?

Regardless, it has been done and now one must examine the consequences. How interesting it is that India hardly has been in the US vocabulary since—well, since when? The Bhopal chemical contamination catastrophe in the 1980s? Except for relatively minor references to the continuing slaughter in Eastern Europe and mention in business news of the financial problems in Asia, about the only thing that has turned our attention from our sex-and-governmental-behavior scandals to matters international of late has been the prominent celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel.

The numerous commemorations of this event are, of themselves, thought provoking as in reality Israel as a nation is not crucial to the safety of the United States. We have friends throughout the world—India long has been one of them—and even Iran is making not-so-subtle overtures for our two countries to become companions once again. Many persons used to aver that Israel was our 51st state, until it was pointed out that not one of our fifty receives the per capita funds from our federal government that Israel does.

So what is to be made of the new nuclear stance of India? President Clinton has announced that, effective immediately, we are imposing economic sanctions on the country which is predicted to become the most populous in the world within the next decade, and which depends on the United States as its number one trade partner. Will our sanctions

cause India to destroy its nuclear capabilities? Of course not. But perhaps we can induce India to become the 150th signatory to the Nuclear Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which she has thus far failed to do.

But just how do we curtail weapons expansion—nuclear or otherwise—when we are not uniform in our treatment of nations with such capabilities? It has been an open secret for years that Israel and South Africa were working diligently—

been thought of as a friend? The greater problem looms obviously large.

Pakistan, partitioned from India at the time of independence from the United Kingdom in 1947, has experienced three wars with India since the partition. We know Pakistan has nuclear accessibility and most probably, nuclear capability. And now Pakistan will feel obliged to have access to a nuclear arsenal "for self-preservation."

It goes without saying that not one nation has ever openly claimed to have developed nuclear weapons for offensive purposes. All is done in the name of self defense. But once tit-for-tat tests between competing nations begin, all hell may break loose.

Literally.

This takes us back to religion. Pakistan and its one-time-other-half, Bangladesh (the world's poorest per capita income country) were carved from India so as to provide for an Islamic state—later states, as the two parts were separated by the northern half of India. And the current Hindu-nationalist regime now ruling India seems less than tolerant of other governments or religions infringing on either its territory or religious beliefs. This is hardly what Mahatma Gandhi envisioned.

Ah what a sorry mess we humans contrive. A popular tune from the 1950s ends its refrain with, "And I don't like anybody very much." We claim to be internationally oriented, yet we crave isolationism. We ache to become friends (read that business associates) with China, yet we ever so loudly promote human rights. We yearn to be the great peacemaker of the world, yet we allow the Benjamin Netanyahu of this same world to dictate peace terms to us while licking their chops as they accept our money. Or are we just being Christian-like, turning our other cheek? Unfortun-

nately as we do this, it exposes only our deaf ear. Or are we being Moses-like? Mohammed-like? Maybe Buddha-like? Oh dear, there we come full circle to poor Buddha once again. Perhaps to be on the safe, defensive only (of course) side we should resume our nuclear testing and set off an underground thermonuclear device next Christmas day... But that's for another column. ■

Distortion of historical truths

Zionist perspective breeds confusion

By Jawad Abbassi

On April 30, 1998 there was a lecture in the London School of Economics to commemorate Israel's 50th birthday. The lecture was given by Dr Shlomo Perlach who is the director of Education in the Jewish Agency in London. It started with a "promise" to the mostly young western Jewish audience, that the lecture will not be propaganda-laden but rather factual and objective.

Alas, the end result was nothing of the sort. His lecture contained a series of myths well established in the Israeli psyche which prompted a short discussion between us, the small Arab audience, and the lecturer. Three claims stood out and were the subject of the discussions at the end of the lecture. It is worthy of note that the three claims can be readily refuted by Zionist history itself as well as UN records.

The first of the claims of the doctor was the spectacular achievement of Israel in doubling its Jewish population in the three years after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. What was completely neglected by Perlach was that the quick absorption of these immigrants was in fact an "Arab Miracle," to use the words of the Jewish press itself during that period.

Tom Zegev, an Israeli journalist, notes in his book *The Seventh Million*, that many Israelis and the Jewish Agency itself recognized the great effect that the exodus of 700,000 Arabs from Palestine after the 1948 war had on the ability of the newly formed Jewish state to accommodate the rising numbers of Jewish immigrants. According to Zegev's book, the homes of the Arabs were used as temporary shelters for the immigrants pending the building of their permanent settlements and homes.

Perlach's second claim was that Arab hostility towards Israel was irrational and without reason. In our discussions with him he acknowledged two facts: The first is that Israel never allowed the 700,000 Arabs back into their homes and that their numbers are well documented by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, such as the UNRWA.

The second fact was that the Jewish communities in the Arab world were living in relative peace and that their immi-

gration to Israel was a result of the Zionist-instigated conflict along with some rather short-sighted Arab policies, especially in Iraq (where citizenship in Iraqi Jews was repealed in the 1950s, only to be reinstated in the 1960s). Despite Perlach's acknowledgment of this, he still contradicted himself and maintained that Arab hostility was irrational and baseless—much to the confusion of his young Jewish audience.

The previous point lead to Perlach's third claim, revolving around the role of the Holocaust and European anti-Semitism in the success of the Zionist program. He claimed that it wasn't just persecution that made Zionism popular but rather it was the Jewish longing to "be together in one homeland." We pointed out to him that while this may have been true of a very few early Zionist pioneers, the fact remains, as detailed by Zionist historians themselves, that the bulk of immigrants to Israel came as refugees.

Most immigrants came from Europe after World War II. Furthermore, the Ultra Orthodox Jewish opposition to the idea of a pre-messianic state of Israel was only pacified by the Holocaust and the persecutions in Europe. In addition, the immigration of many Jews from

the Arab world to Israel was a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict (caused by the unilateral declaration of the state of Israel against the will of the Arabs of Palestine who were the majority in 1948).

The fact that two-thirds of the world's Jewry still choose to live as non-Israelis in prosperous communities in the West is living proof against Perlach's unsubstantiated claims. While he acknowledged all of this, he still maintained, quite paradoxically, his original public position—again much to the confusion of his audience.

Perlach also attacked the Palestinian identity as a newly born idea and thus an illegitimate one. We readily retorted that Zionism itself is only 100 years old and expressed our surprise that he didn't consider it equally invalid! Other points came up regarding the position of the Israeli Arabs where it was evident that Perlach subscribed to the opinion that full equality must never be given to them, because Israel is a Jewish state first and foremost, and that the Arabs must be content with their position as second- or third-class citizens.

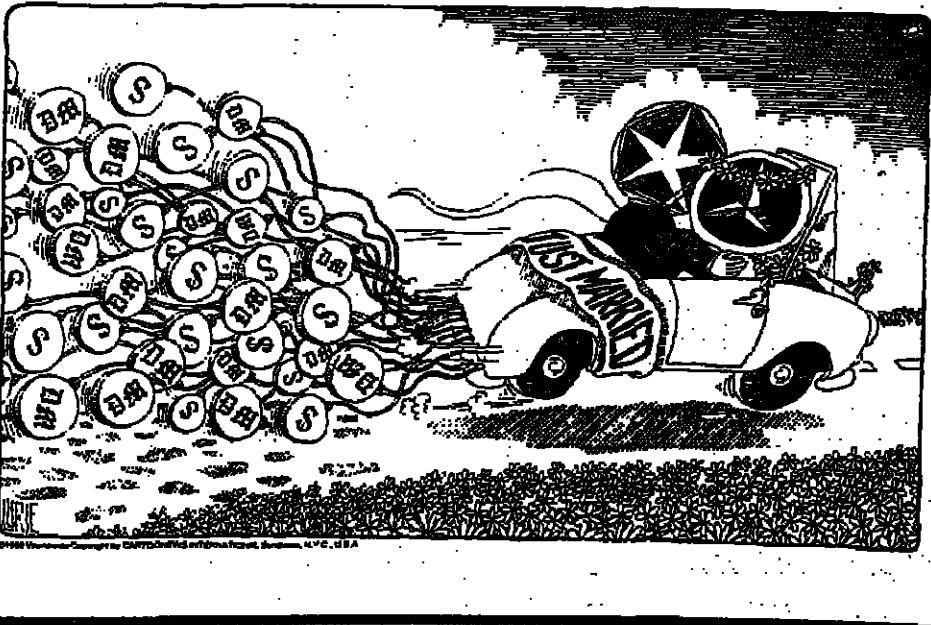
Interestingly enough, he kept referring to Israel as a western country in a strong alliance with the US. He also spoke fluent Arabic. He came

across as someone who is more concerned with perpetuating a conflict (in the vain hope of ever-lasting Israeli supremacy in the Middle East) than with making the hard concessions and hard compromises necessary to promote the cause of regional peace.

The lecture, as it exemplified the continuing Zionist denial of basic facts regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, convinced me that a "just and lasting" peace in the Middle East can never be achieved without a true balance of power that will force these hard compromises to be made. These can only be based on a mutual right of return for Palestinian refugees to be citizens of Israel, and of a future Palestinian state, and for the Jews of the Arab World to be citizens of their respective original countries. Judaism, after all, is and has always been an integral part of the Middle East. Dr Perlach's brand of Zionism, on the other hand, isn't.

For this sole scenario of a just and lasting peace to work, the Arabs need to end what Edward Said calls their "state of powerlessness." Towards that end, they need democratic and civil societies as a first and important step. And much to the delight of Dr Perlach and those of his opinions, the Arabs are far away from that. ■

Lurie's NewsCartoon



Middle East Beat

by Khairi Tanheek

A chance meeting

IN A chance encounter with a German journalist, the conversation inevitably lead us to the current state of the peace process, in which stalemate and violence are threatening to overtake all good intentions.

During the discussion, our new friend explained that there lately is a noticeable shift in European public opinion towards Israel, which is becoming especially clear in Germany. He took for granted that the Arab world already had a media strategy and information campaign that would capitalize on these positive transformations in sympathy.

So it was difficult to discuss the issue, because our German friend was assuming that such a strategy was already being implemented. With much frustration, one attempted to fudge the issue, at the same time explaining that one was in the end relatively uninformed about such efforts even if they did exist.

One could have mentioned that many Arab satellite stations took care to broadcast programs about the Palestinian peoples' plight on the 50th anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel, although one was less than surprised to discover in response that the European Channel "Arte" had already broadcast a range of programs related to these same concerns. At least in this respect, one avoided preaching to the already converted, and changed track from the unfortunately all-too-common path of self-flagellation and lamentation.

It seems the essence of the problem is that we want to concentrate on ourselves as Arabs so much, that we tend to forget that informing the international community of the current circumstances outweighs all efforts toward a pseudo-patriotism and the incidental emotions that yield only the cathartic effects of self-satisfaction.

Our diplomatic missions abroad are undoubtedly fulfilling their functions admirably, and competently carry forward the Jordanian point-of-view. In order to provide access to an even broader information base, however, the establishment of separate information bureaux seems of utmost importance, if even for the reason that many western media personnel prefer to deal with counterparts outside the traditional structure of diplomatic legations.

There are sensitivities regarding this issue, and we must proceed with care when we in Jordan decide to carry our message to the international community. In addition, contacts with European educational establishments, press groups, and parliamentary unions should all be given high priority and should also be established outside the traditional structures of Jordan's representation abroad.

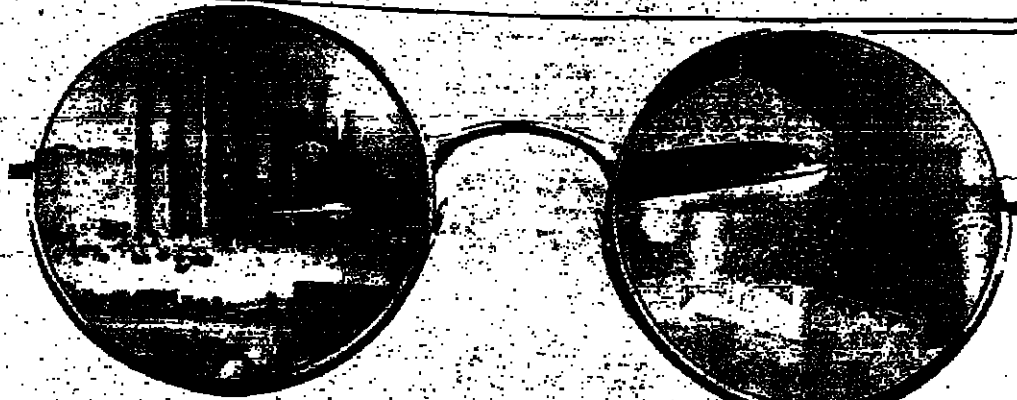
Our Information Bureau in Washington has demonstrated how successful such an enterprise can be, but in Europe, we seem to leave the issue to our embassies. Political happenings in Europe are not only highly publicized; they are often important with respect to developments here in our region. In light of this, it seems clear that a reliable information bureau might be of considerable use in capitalizing on changes of policy and public opinion throughout Europe.

There are many functions that these proposed bureaux can perform, providing we can all come to an understanding that the real issue is not competition for professional territory and role exchange, but to responsibly carry forth the message of Jordan.

The task can be accomplished, provided there is a well-thought out strategy, accompanied by proper allocation and realization of resources.

There is no need to stress the importance of Jordan's association with Europe, and it should be obvious that, in this relationship, there are many socio-economic as well as political issues that need to be constantly followed up. ■

Middle East
East Bank
by
Khatir
A change
meeting



Tehran Non-Stop, Twice Weekly

We are pleased to announce the resumption of direct flights to Tehran. Starting June 15th, Royal Jordanian will fly from Amman to Tehran every Monday and Friday and from Tehran to Amman every Tuesday and Saturday. For more information and reservation, please call Royal Jordanian or your travel agent.

ROYAL JORDANIAN
Reflecting the Change

Business scene

■ Jordan Investment and Finance Bank made a gross profit of JD 2.17 million in 1997. About JD 1 million is slated to be distributed among shareholders. The budget of the bank increased by JD 37.4 million to JD 231.6 million, and as a result shareholders' rights increased by JD 19 million.

■ The government is to buy 120 metric tons of wheat from the United States. Already a delegation has been formed to travel to the USA and finalize the deal. The shipment, which costs \$18 million, comes as part of the US aid program to Jordan for 1997.

■ Al Naizak for Caste Iron and Equipment Manufacturing has sold JD 149.3 thousand worth of material in 1997. This is good news for the company which more than doubled its sales figures of JD 70.4 thousand for 1996. The registered capital of the company currently stands at JD 1.73 million.

■ Total Jordanian exports were up by about 2.5%. The average growth of convertible industries and fruits and vegetables was around 16.5%. This reflects an increasing demand for local produce. "Local products reach 107 markets world-wide, extending to all five continents," says Farouk Al Hadidi, director of Jordan Exports Development and Commercial Centers (JEDCO). Arab trade comprised 52.5%, while exports to Europe stood at 10%, with 7% going to African states.

■ Pre-tax profits of the Arab International Hotels Co. were estimated to be JD 3.59 million. Its distributable earnings recorded a rise of 7% over comparable figures from 1996. The company is planning to participate in the construction of a Marriott Hotel along the eastern coast of the Dead Sea.

Foreign Exchange

Wednesday, 20 MAY

	Buy JD	Sell JD
US \$	0.7080	0.7100
£	1.1510	1.1568
DM	0.4124	0.4145
SFR	0.4801	0.4825
FRF	0.1227	0.1233
YEN (100)	0.5624	0.5652
DEL	0.3667	0.3685
LIT (100)	0.0419	0.0421

Healthy economy requires more active private sector

AMMAN (Star)—The Philosophy of privatization—whether as a concept or as an economic strategy—remains controversial at both the official and 'street' levels.

Is it inevitable to comply with a worldwide trend towards greater openness and globalization or is it simply a means to achieve sustainable and comprehensive development?

Adel Al Qudhah of the Privatization Unit in the Prime Ministry says privatization is the only option and reiterates that it is a means and not an objective in itself.

"In the wake of the new challenges imposed by the rapid pace of economic and technological developments, people are increasingly realizing that the new trend led by the World Trade Organization is the correct one," he adds. "This effectively means the end of the era of protectionism and subsidy."

"As we reach the end of the millennium, more and more business/financial alliances are being formed. The European Union is one among a number of other economically-based groups, for example, between Southeast Asian countries, or between Latin and North America and Canada. Here, in the

Arab world, too, partnership agreements with the EU are being formed.

At the Arab level the idea of a Common Arab Market is once again gaining momentum. Calls are increasing for the establishment of an Arab Trade Organization which would seek to reduce tariffs by 10 percent annually, so that by the year 2008 they would be completely removed.

Al Qudhah argues that there is a dynamic movement going on in the world at the heart of which is a 'free' economy characterized by quality, productivity, modernization, and, of course, a high degree of competition for markets.

The aim is to turn the whole world into a "small village," with easier access to the goods, technology, manpower, management and capital that are now restricted by various national laws. In this trend it is the private rather than the public sector that would lead the way.

However, critics openly point out the hazards of privatizing state institutions, especially those industries that are termed strategic and profitable. Above all they say that adopting a free-for-all market philosophy would would make this

country—and others—a "dumping ground" for foreign produce which would greatly affect not only local industry, but the economy of the entire region as well.

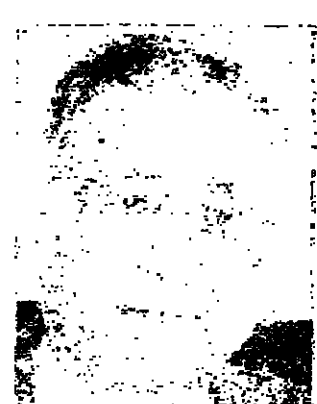
But Al Qudhah refutes these claims, reiterating that the move toward greater privatization means a redistribution of roles for both the public and private sectors that will strike a new, and more flexible balance with respect to the competition coming in from outside, which will no doubt have a constant effect on local markets and industries.

"The government can't in any case bear the burdens and face the challenges on its own," he says.

And even if it somehow manages to do so, then we can't expect quality. "So it's essential to adapt ourselves to the requirements of comprehensive development, and that involves greater cooperation between the public and private sectors."

However, this kind of cooperation needs proper economic planning, particularly lessening the importance of centralization and equally getting the private sector as fully involved as possible.

Al Qudhah points out that



Al Qudhah

the trend towards privatization, which was launched in the early 1990s, was introduced upon the results of a detailed study, which showed that the operational efficiency of a large number of public sector institutions was sluggish.

In addition, critics from the private sector have complained about the monopoly the public sector has in the economy.

Al Qudhah refers to examples of public institutions being privatized. "For example, 40% of the Jordan Telecommunication Company (JTC) will be sold to a strategic partner who will own the capital, the expertise, the technology and the management," he explains. He continued that the merits of privatization—improved performance and capital liquidity are

two—in the long run will exceed the disadvantages, which at this point are mainly fears of things like increased unemployment or rising prices.

However, those critical of privatization argue that this means turning our national institutions into multi-national bodies which we would still rely on, yet over which we would have less control.

They stress that we indeed do have the expertise and manpower, and that priority should be given to national capital, which always seems to be ignored or forgotten.

Other sectors subjected to privatization include the Jordan Electric Power Co., National Petroleum Co., Royal Jordanian and the Maan SPA complex as well as the Jordan Cement Factories.

In order to put an end to people's fears about privatization, the government is in the process of passing laws to encourage competition and prohibit monopolistic practices, for the protection of the national economy.

Moreover privatizing public companies will in no way expose employees to danger of losing their jobs. Instead, it is seen by Al Qudhah to create new job opportunities and, in the long run, increase the demand for manpower. ■

The appeal of 'the glossy posse'

By Hani Samir

THEY look like they belong and they are. They are the glossy posse, the Mercedes-Benz, the Volvo, the BMW, the Audi, the Jaguar, the Range Rover, the Aston Martin, the Ferrari, the Porsche, the Lotus, the McLaren, the Williams, the Williams FW18, the Williams FW19, the Williams FW20, the Williams FW21, the Williams FW22, the Williams FW23, the Williams FW24, the Williams FW25, the Williams FW26, the Williams FW27, the Williams FW28, the Williams FW29, the Williams FW30, the Williams FW31, the Williams FW32, the Williams FW33, the Williams FW34, the Williams FW35, the Williams FW36, the Williams FW37, the Williams FW38, the Williams FW39, the Williams FW40, the Williams FW41, the Williams FW42, the Williams FW43, the Williams FW44, the Williams FW45, the Williams FW46, the Williams FW47, the Williams FW48, the Williams FW49, the Williams FW50, the Williams FW51, the Williams FW52, the Williams FW53, the Williams FW54, the Williams FW55, the Williams FW56, the Williams FW57, the Williams FW58, the Williams FW59, the Williams 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Mossad Spymasters no more

By Judy Dempsey

AT 2 am on 19 February, two cars drove up to a grey-painted apartment building in a suburb of Bern, the Swiss capital. Five people got out and two were posted as look-outs. The others went to work. They found what they wanted in a storeroom the junction box for the building's telephone system.

This was a top secret mission. The agents draped a dark cloth over the glass door to keep the light from attracting attention. But, as they tampered with the equipment, the operatives were so clumsy, so unprofessional that a first-floor resident was woken by the racket. She called the police, who, handily, were on duty at the station just 500 metres down the road. The "intruders", with their electronic equipment, were caught cold, though one, feigning nobody, feigned a heart attack.

Bad plot for a B-grade film? A rejected storyline from "Mission Impossible"?—The "intruders" were agents of Mossad, Israel's revered secret service, and they were spying in a friendly country.

"You can't imagine the incompetence," said a senior western diplomat. "Mossad should have known there is a policeman in every Swiss."

Six months earlier, another set of Mossad agents were caught in Amman, in equally embarrassing circumstances. Khaled Meshal, a prominent member of

The rules were dictated by the necessity to defend the fledgling Jewish state. "We were surrounded by hostile Arab states whose only aim was to destroy us," said E.

"It strengthened our resolve to form intelligence services which would foil attacks on our new state. It was an era of great recklessness. We were accountable to very few. The media, unlike now, was censored."

Washington and European capitals were ambiguous towards the new Jewish state. And they were also sceptical about Mossad, founded in 1949 initially to monitor and foil attempts by Arab neighbours to acquire weapons which could be used against Israel.

But Mossad had two big advantages over other intelligence. And it had a marvellous reservoir of talent. "People were our main asset," said G, a former agent.

The "people" were part of the great Zionist "ingathering" of hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants from Iraq, Iran, Russia, Morocco, and from all the countries of Europe. With them, came dialects and languages, different cultures and knowledge of how to behave in the countries of their birth. No intelligence agency outside Israel could boast such a reservoir of talent. But was it any good at intelligence gathering?

The US would soon find out. In February 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev, the former Soviet leader, delivered behind closed doors his devastating speech indicting Stalinism and the purges.

Washington

was desperate to get a copy.

But how? Israel obliged helped by Victor Griefsky, a young Israeli journalist in Warsaw, in bed it turned out, with a communist from whom he managed to obtain a copy of the speech.

He passed it on to Israeli diplomats in Warsaw who dutifully sent the material to their masters in Tel Aviv. The CIA paid \$1 million on delivery. It was welcome cash for a country trying to buy weapons. And, for Mossad, it won international respect from its peers.

With the plethora of linguists and people on the ground, Mossad pulled off another coup. In 1963, Ezer Weizman, now Israeli president, then commander of the Israeli Air Force, wanted to know what kind of military equipment the Soviet Union was supplying to its Arab comrades. Israel had to know in order to defend itself.

"If you bring me a MIG-21, you will have done a good day's work," said Weizman, half in jest, half serious.

Mossad took up the challenge. On August 16 1966, after three years of planning, an Iraqi MIG-21, the most advanced fighter supplied by the Soviet Union to the Arab states, landed at an airbase in northern Israel. To pull off such a coup required the efforts of an Egyptian-Armenian Mossad agent and a (Catholic) Iraqi air force pilot. It was a complex operation which again impressed the CIA.

Other successes fuelled the Mossad myth of daring invincibility. Among the most notable were the capture in May 1960 of Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi war criminal, the June 1976 raid on Entebbe airport, when Mossad rescued 106 Jewish hostages held by the radical Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and "Operation Moses", the airlifting of thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel between 1981 and 1984.

But next to such successes were terrible lapses of judgment.

"Sometimes we did not evaluate information," said E. "We could gather it, recruit agents, monitor our enemies, carry out operations. But the question was how good were we at evaluating intelligence?"

That was put to the test in 1973. Even though a military build-up was taking place in Egypt, Mossad and the other intelligence agencies were convinced an attack on Israel was "highly improbable".

Maybe it was a sense of overblown confidence after the Six Day War, when Israel captured east Jerusalem and the West Bank. Maybe it was competition between the intelligence services. In any case, on 6 October, at 1.55pm, on Yom Kippur, when Israel and all its reservists observed one of Judaism's holiest holidays, the Egyptian-Syrian attack began. It ended 11 days later. Israel and its intelligence agencies had taken a battering.

The Agranat Commission, set up to establish the reasons for the blunder, concluded there were insufficient checks and agency members to speak up; and the ignoring of differing opinions.

Over a quarter of a century later, the Yom Kippur war is still used to warn Mossad recruits against *kontzeptzia*, an idea fixe. The Mehdal, a Hebrew neologism for intelligence blunder used to describe the Yom Kippur war, is "the first thing we learn in intelligence", according to one young officer.

"If you want a reliable intelligence service, you can't allow 'yes men' who will tell ministers what they want to hear," said G, the former Mossad agent. "Agents must challenge their own assumptions. Mossad must tell the politicians about the trends indicating the possibilities of peace."

Financial Times Syndication

PNA minister looks toward 'community for all'

Husseini: Palestinian state would stabilize regional relations

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Middle East calldron boiled over last week as Israel marked its 50th anniversary and Palestinians commemorated *Al Nakba*, the catastrophe of Israel's founding and their own uprooting half a century ago. The *Al Nakba* demonstrations left at least eight Palestinians dead and hundreds injured in what was described as the worst Israeli-Palestinian fighting in 20 months. The protests sent a message of growing Palestinian impatience over deadlocked peace efforts. Meanwhile in Washington, US Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright worked to hold together the fragile peace process by meeting for two days with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Faisal Husseini, 57, the Palestinian Authority's minister without portfolio in Jerusalem, is touring the United States to build support for the creation of a Palestinian state and peace with the Israelis. He was in Los Angeles last week. The soft-spoken Faisal Husseini would appear, at least in recent years, to approach his differences with the Israelis with diplomacy. The Cairo-educated Husseini, who keeps an unofficial office in East Jerusalem, made allies inside Israel among members of the peace movement and was a leading delegate to the Madrid conference. He is a voice to be reckoned with in the Palestinian community. Visiting dignitaries, from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to US representatives, make a point of seeing Husseini while in Jerusalem.

While he is well-liked in Palestinian intellectual circles and known as a moderate, the tensions between him and Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat are an open secret, although publicly he maintains that Arafat, despite his human rights record, is the best man for the job of accomplishing a peace pact. But observers say that Arafat, who gave Husseini the plum position of representing Palestinian interests in Jerusalem, recently has pushed Husseini out of the decision-making circle. Interviewed by Ann Brenoff.

There have been riots and violence in Gaza and on the West Bank.

Yasser Arafat issued a statement last week that there would be no peace unless Jerusalem is the capital of Palestine, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu raised the ante by insisting on the need for territorial buffers. Is the peace process falling apart?

Unfortunately, yes. When we started the peace process, we started with certain premises. The first one is that compromise must occur...Because of that, we reached the Oslo agreement and we agreed to start to enter implementation of this agreement—until we had this new (Netanyahu) government...Instead of being pragmatic, he remains an ideologist. Instead of applying logic, he believes that everything we gain is something he will lose and, because of that, he is refusing to give up anything.

The Palestinians maintain that East Jerusalem is their capital while the Israeli consensus recognizes an undivided Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. Would you consider a peace settlement where Jerusalem is undivided?

I live in Jerusalem. Jerusalem now is a divided city. There are two cities actually: one free city, one under occupation. What we are looking to...have is an open, free-access city...have a Palestinian side and an Israeli side with free access between the two...

Is there a practical plan to divide Jerusalem?

I'm not talking about dividing. I'm talking about managing to have the two capitals there with free access between them. We can talk about establishing a place in the middle of Jerusalem—half on the Israeli side and half on the Palestinian side—set aside for free worship of religion where there will be no civilian or government buildings. There are five major religions based in Jerusalem and they all must feel they are sharing the city.

How do you envision the future map of the Middle East?

I think in the next century there will be no place for small states like the

United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy. They are already building the European Union. I believe the same will be true for the Middle East. Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt—we need to have regional cooperation. Palestine will be part of a larger regional entity in the future. So when we are asking for a Palestinian state, it's...because we would like to solve the problems of the Palestinian people. They are without a homeland and we want to give them their own state that, if they are living elsewhere now, they can come back to.



Husseini

In a 1992 Jordanian newspaper you were quoted as saying: "Sooner or later we must force the Israeli society to collaborate with a greater society, our own Arab society, and later we will bring about the gradual dissolution of the Zionist entity." Do you still feel that way and if so, is Israel negotiating its own disappearance?

I was referring to the (more distant) future. In the future, there will be mutual cooperation in this area: We will be part of a larger, regional cooperation. There will be no borders. Palestinians can go and live in Israel. Israelis can go and live anywhere...What I meant was that in the end, this area will be one community and all of us will be part of it. It will be nothing to say "Egyptian" or "Palestinian" or "Israeli."

In your lifetime?

I can't say that. We can witness the beginning of it. But in my lifetime? I'd love to. If you asked anyone 20 years ago whether they would see the collapse of the Soviet Union in their lifetime, they would say "no."

It's an open secret that there have been tensions between you and Arafat. Do you feel he has been effective in the peace process or an impediment to it?

Every one of us has positive points and negative points...Overall, I believe that Yasser Arafat is the most able one to lead in this field.

Are you comfortable with his human rights record?

You can say he is the leader of the Palestinian people and trying to build a state. I was the one who created the first human rights commission center in Jerusalem. So over this point for sure, there will be some contradictory issues. If Yasser Arafat was a human rights activist, he wouldn't be a leader...Sometimes, Arafat was forced to implement certain steps to serve the security

even if it hurt him with human rights activists, including me.

You've expressed skepticism about Netanyahu's claim that new settlements are necessary for Israel's security. Can you explain?

Security has nothing to do with it. He creates more of a security problem by making these settlements...Each move like this creates a new, complicated situation. By putting a Palestinian location here and an Israeli settlement there, it has just led to bad situations, especially because those who he has gotten to make these settlements are not people who are coming because they are in love with the Palestinians. They come because they are against something the Palestinians did or Palestinian independence. So he is breeding hatred...We are trying to rebuild our country and we would like to rebuild our economy...to build schools, to build factories, roads, hospitals; to create new jobs and allow prosperity. But that's not possible without investments. No investments will come if there is no stability. And there will be no stability if there is no security. And there will be no security for me as there is no security for the Israelis.

You make it sound so reasonable and beneficial for both sides. So why isn't it working?

I'll tell you: Netanyahu is against the Oslo agreement. He ran an extreme, harsh campaign against the government of Rabin-Peres...I believe that Netanyahu is trying not to do anything until the next elections.

So you don't think there'll be peace so long as Netanyahu is prime minister?

No, unfortunately. But I never say never.

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Iran lukewarm to US waiver of sanctions

By John Lancaster

TEHRAN—Government officials on Tuesday welcomed the Clinton administration's decision to waive penalties on a multinational energy consortium that plans to develop a vast Iranian gas field, calling it a possible step toward better relations between the two countries. But they didn't exactly gush with gratitude.

"This has a positive aspect and I think Iranians will positively receive it," said a senior Iranian diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"But it doesn't mean too much concerning the relationship between the two countries."

Like other officials here, the diplomat expressed the view that, given the depth of European opposition, Washington had little choice but to find a loophole in the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, which penalizes foreign firms that invest more than \$20 million a year in Iran's energy industry.

Iran's tepid reaction to the waiver, announced Monday in London by President Clinton and European Union officials, also reflected the prevailing

belief among supporters of President Mohammed Khatami that Washington has failed to capitalize on Khatemi's proposal, in a CNN interview last January, for informal dialogue between the two nations.

Many Iranian officials and academics contend that while Khatemi has lived up to his promise to promote cultural exchanges between the two countries, the United States has not responded in kind. Continued hostility on the part of Washington, they say, has strengthened the position of religious hard-liners in the Iranian Parliament and elsewhere who oppose Khatemi's overtures to the West as a betrayal of the country's 1979 Islamic revolution.

The administration is "missing an opportunity in the sense that the...CNN interview was a move on the part of Khatemi that had to be responded to more concretely," said Hadi Semati, a political scientist at Tehran University.

"The US really didn't have to do a lot. It could just lower the rhetoric. There is a balance right now in Iranian domestic politics and the balance has to be carefully observed...The ad-

ministration doesn't seem to have a sense of the real politics here."

The State Department accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism, seeking nuclear weapons and trying to wreck the Middle East peace process. But Khatemi's upset election victory last May, and his subsequent overture to the United States, was welcomed in Washington as a possible turning point in US-Iranian relations.

Contrary to what many Iranians believe, the administration has taken modest steps to respond to Khatemi's proposal, such as relaxing travel restrictions on Iranian diplomats in the United States. And the State Department is considering an easing of entry barriers to visiting Iranians following an embarrassing episode recently in which US customs authorities in Chicago fingerprinted and photographed arriving Iranian wrestlers.

In that context, Clinton's announcement Monday could be seen as a significant event. Not only does the decision waive penalties on three companies—France's Total, Russia's Gazprom and Malaysia's Pe-

tronas—involved in a \$2 billion project to develop Iran's South Pars gas fields, it also sets a strong precedent that is likely to encourage additional foreign investment in Iran, analysts say.

But Iran has been reluctant to express its appreciation. "In a Face-Saving Move, Clinton Listens to Voice of EU Reason," crowed the headline in this morning's *Tehran Times*, a conservative English-language daily.

The senior Iranian diplomat said it was hardly surprising that the United States would choose to avoid a damaging trade war with close European allies such as Britain and France. Both strongly opposed the sanctions act as an attempt by Washington to dictate their policy toward Iran.

"My personal view is that Americans couldn't do anything else," said the senior official. "That law was not practical, and from the beginning it seemed it would not apply."

In a broader sense, Khatemi's supporters are deeply frustrated by what they regard as Washington's continued belligerence toward Tehran. Iranian officials were incensed

at the recent inauguration of Radio Free Iran, created by Congress to broadcast anti-government propaganda into Iran.

"It's ridiculous," the diplomat fumed. "Seventy percent of (Iranian voters) voted for Khatemi and the US is establishing a radio (station) to free Iran? This is direct internal interference...It had a negative effect on the atmosphere that Khatemi had created."

Despite his immense popularity here, Khatemi is limited in his ability to respond to any American initiative because of opposition from hard-line religious conservatives led by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme leader. For that reason, said a prominent Iranian analyst with close ties to the government, "Nobody dares, on either side, to welcome" the administration's waiver.

"When you are insecure," he added, "You look for excuses and alibis."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Radisson SAS Hotel Amman on the move

All Z. Mami has recently joined the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman in the position of Sales Manager. Mami is a Jordanian national and has gained extensive experience in the five-star hotel industry in Jordan and in the Gulf. He is fluent in both Arabic and English.

Mami and colleagues Adel Amin, Nasser Kanaan, Yassin Botoush, Lawrence Steeman, Hasan Barakat, Nasser Algharib, Amal Jad Al Hoq and Anj Khalifeh will take care of all your hotel needs with a true "Yes, I can" spirit. The sales team can be contacted by telephone at 06 5607100, by fax at 06 5665160 or via e-mail: amamz s1@go.com.jo



Takin
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Taking Suharto at his word

By Keith B. Richburg

JAKARTA, Indonesia, May 20—Thousands of cheering, chanting students continued their occupation of the Indonesian parliament grounds Wednesday morning—their ranks bolstered by hundreds more young students arriving by the hour—in an extraordinary show of "People Power" defiance of President Suharto and his plan to stay in power long enough to oversee a gradual transition to a new, elected leadership.

But a massive military clampdown on the capital Wednesday morning prevented a planned anti-government march that had been expected to draw a million people into the streets.

The march organizers early Wednesday

called off the planned street protest fearing a confrontation with the troops. With the rally cancelled, the parliament building and surrounding grounds became the new focal point of anti-government protest, drawing comparisons to the way Beijing's Tiananmen Square became the venue for a 1989 student uprising that ended in violence. Troops have taken up positions around the parliament grounds, blocking traffic along a major highway that runs past the complex. But Wednesday morning the soldiers were not preventing new students from entering the compound's gates.

Rais, opposition politician Megawati Sukarnoputri and other prominent anti-government political and religious leaders Wednesday morning were also converging on the parliament building for what was expected to be a mass anti-government rally Wednesday is the anniversary of the birth of Indonesia's nationalist movement against Dutch colonial rule.

The protesters are demanding that Suharto step down immediately, dismissing his proposal for a gradual transition as a stalling tactic that could allow him to cling to power for months. Many fear the defiance of the students and the political opposition will ultimately lead to new confrontation with the nation's powerful military, which is seen as backing Suharto's plan for a slow turnover of power as a way to avoid the chaos of a leadership vacuum that an immediate resignation might bring.

The Jakarta Post summed up

the tense mood here in an editorial Wednesday morning headlined, "More turmoil ahead?" As the crisis of confidence in the government reaches the extreme proportions, many critics are no longer willing to put their trust in the president's integrity, suspecting he might merely be trying to buy time with his latest reform plan, the editorial said. "It looks as if we may be heading toward a time of mounting pressure, growing disorder and economic distress."

Tuesday morning, Suharto stunned the nation by saying he had heard the call for his resignation and had no interest in staying in power against the popular will.

He then promised to set up a "reform council" that will draw up plans for new elections to be

held "as quickly as possible," and said the parliament elected at that time would choose the country's new leadership. But he gave no timetable for the transition.

At first, many viewed Suharto's resignation pledge as a momentous, binding pledge to an era that began 32 years ago when the former general took power against the backdrop of similar economic and political turmoil. Some analysts said his proposal for a stage-managed resignation, and his insistence on adhering to the constitution, was aimed at allowing himself to be elected again—and enough

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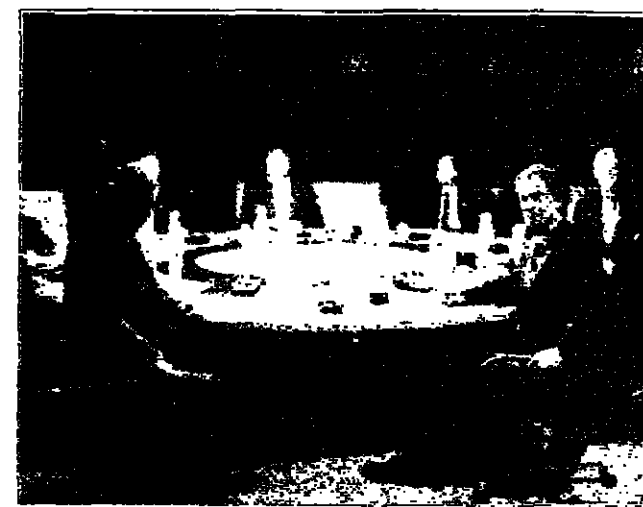
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Political fallout from Indian H-bomb tests just beginning



G-8 members take a break from discussing crucial issues

DEEPLY CONCERNED that the "nuclear tide" has turned in the wrong direction for the first time in nearly a decade, the leaders of the so-called Group of 8 (G-8) struggled Sunday to devise a plan to stop a new nuclear arms race.

But after the final session of a three-day summit here, they conceded that they had not developed a clear strategy for how to deal with the problem, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed "frustration" at the lack of available options.

In a separate meeting, President Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin agreed that one step they can take to try to discourage India and Pakistan from conducting nuclear tests is to expedite work on nuclear weapons reduction treaties. But domestic obstacles in Russia seemed a significant obstacle to that effort.

India's nuclear tests last week and worries that Pakistan would follow suit overshadowed the scheduled topics at the annual meeting of the G-8. The group consists of the world's seven leading industrial powers—the United States, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan—plus Russia.

After failing to win international backing for tough punitive measures against New Delhi, the United States dangled the prospect of significant rewards for Pakistan if it refrains from testing atomic weapons of its own.

But in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad, disappointment that the world's eight most powerful leaders had offered nothing more than a verbal condemnation of India heightened prospects that Pakistan soon will try to match the nuclear prowess of its regional adversary.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmad said the light treatment accorded India by the G-8 leaders meeting made it imperative that his nation act to safeguard its security.

He stopped short of declaring that Pakistan will detonate a nuclear device but made it clear that there were few other options.

"We cannot act with madness as the Indians have," Ahmad said. "But Pakistan's security has been directly threatened. It will respond in a manner consistent with the magnitude of the threat that faces us."

His comments, coupled with the general mood in Islamabad, generated a sense of fading hope that a regional nuclear arms race can be avoided.

"Pakistan doesn't have a choice," said former Pakistani Ambassador to the US Moeen Lodhi, arguing that Pakistan must detonate its own nuclear device to respond to last week's five nuclear tests by

arch-rival India. "A nuclear challenge can only be countered by a nuclear counter-response."

That counter-response could be swift, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told ruling Muslim League party workers in Lahore Sunday that Pakistan could prepare a nuclear test within "12 to 26 hours."

Indicative of the anxiety the tests have caused, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, in London for the G-8 conference, mistakenly reported that Pakistan had already set one off.

"It is only a matter of time," Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ghaffar Ayub Khan told the BBC Saturday, adding to the confusion and international concern. Khan said the cabinet had approved a nuclear test blast, but the Foreign Ministry and Sharif's office said the government is keeping its options open.

Yet it was clear in Islamabad that Pakistani leaders felt they needed more than words to counter the impact of India's nuclear testing. Ahmad made it clear that US appeals to refrain from exploding a nuclear device ring hollow because the Americans could not guarantee Pakistan's security.

The G-8's failure to agree on concrete sanctions to go along with its condemnation of India's tests and stated intention to deploy nuclear weapons, has put considerable domestic political pressure on Pakistani leader Sharif to press the nuclear test button—despite the potentially dire economic consequences of sanctions that would probably follow a Pakistani test.

The forces pushing Sharif to go ahead with a test include factions of his own party, virtually the entire political opposition, Muslim fundamentalists and militant students. His predecessor, Benazir Bhutto, has advocated a nuclear test, and even his own outspoken foreign minister seems to favor one.

Yet beneath the surface, there is still widespread disagreement among Pakistanis about key related issues, such as nuclear deterrence, the role of the United States and the link between the economy and security.

When it comes to deterrence, many advocates of a Pakistani nuclear test view the Cold War as a model. Faced with a hostile neighbor with five times the territory, eight times the population, more than twice as many soldiers and perhaps a small nuclear arsenal, many influential Pakistanis long for a nuclear standoff with India that will be tense but peaceful.

Only by exploding a nuclear device and establishing the fact that nuclear aggression will ensure mutual destruction can Pakistan guarantee its own

security, say many opinion leaders here. To do otherwise would be a sign of weakness or inability, they say.

Yet other analysts are not certain whether a nuclear test is really needed to deter India from possible aggression. Retired Lt. General Talat Masood argues that open testing could lead to even more development and deployment.

"An arms race will only make things more insecure rather than more secure," Masood said. Unlike the Soviet Union and the United States, Pakistan and India border on one another, have a territorial dispute and often have emotional leaders. "It's a very combustible material," Masood said.

There are also mixed viewpoints concerning the fragility of Pakistan's economy and its vulnerability to international pressure. The finance minister has noted that inflows of foreign capital are keeping Pakistan from defaulting on its international loans. Pakistan's military is as eager as anyone to avoid an economic setback.

"The military understands the importance of a strong economy and an industrial base capable of sustaining its armed forces," Masood said. If Pakistan goes ahead with a nuclear test and suffers from economic sanctions, that will hurt the military's ability to get educated, skilled soldiers, replacement parts and new equipment and technology.

At the same time, however, Pakistanis don't want to barter their perceived national security interests for commercial ones. Moreover, they say it is unfair that India, because of its insular economy, might be better able to withstand any sanctions that are imposed for testing nuclear devices.

Finally, the role of the United States arouses divided emotions. Pakistan's leaders are upset that the United States tried to play down the danger of India's Hindu nationalist government making good on its campaign pledge to carry out new nuclear tests. Many suspected, at least

nuclear tests. It is natural to be bewildered by people rejoicing over what conceivably could be the first step in their own annihilation.

But you can be sure the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, or BJP, was not surprised.

Although it heads India's coalition government, the BJP has a problem. Its main strength is in the populous Gangetic plain of northern India—where it is identified as a Hindu nationalist party, a bulwark against the country's 200 million Muslims and southern Indians who do not speak Hindi.

The BJP has never been the truly national party that the Congress Party, ruler of India for most of the years since independence in 1947, has always been, even in its current weakened state. Often forgotten, however, is that one of the main ways the Congress Party expanded its reach was by tapping the nationalist fervor roused by India's three wars with Pakistan.

This latest surge of national pride—similar to emotions engendered by a one-sided Indian victory over Pakistan on the cricket pitch—was precisely what BJP leader and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, always one of the earnest of Indian political personalities, was counting on. After these tests, in fact, look for the BJP to broaden its political base, particularly in southern India.

Of course, the downside of the narrow gains by a single Indian political party is that the kind of fervent, irrational nationalism now in evidence in India exists in an even more virulent form in Pakistan. Pakistan is India without the tradition of *ahimsa*—the nonviolence advocated by Gandhi. In Pakistan, the truck drivers adorn their vehicles with paintings of F-16 fighters sold to Pakistan by the United States.

Moreover, Pakistan has lost—or at best tied—during its three conflicts with India. Thanks to India, the pressures on Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif are immense. If Pakistan is capable, as it has long claimed, it is very likely to test some type of nuclear device.

This is where China comes into play. Now that the nightmare scenario has begun to develop—two potentially unstable Third World countries engaging in a game of nuclear one-upmanship—the most important goal is not to keep Pakistan from retaliating.

The real challenge will come after the Pakistan riposte. Can the two neighbors, whose capitals are only an hour away by air and who share rivers and culture going back thousands of years, avoid another level of escalation? ■

LA Times-Washington Post News Service

Old stereotypes run amok

Russian nationalism gutted by corruption

By Anatol Lieven

"ON RUSSIA'S windswept steppes, the Cossacks ride again," read the headline, as the western press recently lauded the "fearless Cossack." It is the type of an instantly recognized celluloid character, a matinee hero, half-sinister and half-romantic. The Cossacks are a classic example of how a stereotype of Russia persists in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

For if the Cossacks are indeed Russia's sword, in Chechnya it proved to be made not of steel, but of wet cardboard. Their members showed no desire whatsoever to fight, and there was certainly no flood of militant volunteers to their ranks. And this was true even though the result of the war was to confirm Chechen possession of certain areas which were, for several centuries, inhabited by Cossacks.

By December 1995, when I met Yuri Galkhin, ataman of the Russian Cossacks in Chechnya, for the last time in the ruined city of Grozny, he was a broken man. Eight months before a Chechen victory which, in effect, ended the war, he was already trying to leave. This was despite the fact that he and the other ethnic Russians were supposedly under the protection of tens of thousands of Russian troops, who outnumbered and vastly outgunned the Chechen forces facing them.

"How could the Cossacks help us?" Galkhin asked me. "They are scattered among a dozen different subjects of the federation, and they have no serious weapons." His contempt for the Cossack movement was unambiguous.

"All this talk of partitioning Chechnya, of a Cossack region here, is just talk by people sitting safely hundreds of miles away. I

don't care if they call themselves Cossacks, they can call themselves whatever they like for all I care. I know what I call them . . . The Chechens now, they are a strong people, physically and spiritually."

Galkhin, like most Russian civilians in Chechnya, also had nothing but contempt wholly justified by the event for the Russian army for its unwillingness to seek combat with the Chechens: "The soldiers just sit behind their concrete blocks, and if a Chechen takes a shot at them, they blaze away in all directions and kill anything that moves."

The failure of the Russian army and the Cossack movement in Chechnya illustrates the most important characteristic of Russia today: the desperate weakness both of the Russian state and of Russian society. Together, they make for a country which is radically different from any Russia that has existed in the past.

Russia more closely resembles a weak, oligarchical, heavily-criminalized Latin American country of the recent past than it does the Soviet Union or the Russia of the tsars, with which so many western commentators obsessively compare it.

At its simplest, the weakness of the Russian state means that it has been unable to raise the taxes to pay or supply its army properly, or to prevent corrupt bureaucrats and officers from stealing what resources are available. The result has been hungry, badly equipped, demoralized, literally suicidal soldiers and junior officers who despise the state. As "Valery," an interior forces conscript told me in Chechnya: "The Chechens are fighting well because they're fighting to defend their homes... and we're fighting because our commanders tell us to fight. And who are our commanders? Thieves who steal from us and then send us

to die to cover up their own political mistakes."

The weakness of Russian society comes from 70 years of Communist rule, during which especially of course under Lenin and Stalin every autonomous, spontaneously generated social, cultural and political institution was remorselessly smashed, and society atomized.

The lack of real democratic control has allowed the plundering of Russia's resources by the new elites in what was dubbed "privatization." This process had strong analogies to "land reform" in liberal states such as Mexico and Italy in the 19th century enormous tracts of land were transferred to officials, businessmen and politicians with links to the liberal regimes. The mass of the population either did not benefit or actively suffered as a result.

However, the lack of true democracy and civil society in Russia, the apathy and cynicism of the mass of the population have also had one good effect: they have prevented mass mobilization behind political causes and after all, given the economic suffering and moral chaos in Russia today, there is no guarantee whatsoever that these causes would not have been chauvinist ones.

The failure of the Cossacks to mobilize large numbers of Russians—even in the most ethnically mixed and sensitive areas like the North Caucasus—behind paramilitary nationalism is a case in point. This has been a key part of the failure of Russia so far to take the Serbian path: that is, mobilizing large numbers of people, in Russia itself, but much more important, in the Russian minorities outside Russia, to fight for a new, ethnically based Russian empire.

To its credit, the government of Boris Yeltsin has never adopted such a strategy



but as the failure of the Cossacks demonstrates, even if Moscow were to try to mobilize Russians behind such a policy, the apathy of the population would make it unlikely to succeed.

As Chechnya demonstrated, when the Russian army failed, there was no mass movement of Russian nationalism—let alone of Russian volunteers—to insist that the government fight on to protect Russians in Chechnya and suppress Chechen separatism. Most Russians make no secret of their acute dislike for Chechens, but as opinion polls repeatedly demonstrated, the war against them never enjoyed wide popularity and, by 1996, a large majority of Russians wanted to get out.

As for the vast majority of young Russians, their abhorrence of military service, their utter unwillingness to go to fight for Russia in Chechnya or anywhere else, indeed their overwhelming indifference to Russian "national causes," should be blindingly apparent. The commander of an elite Russian military unit told me: "Who'd be a soldier if you could get a job in a bank?"

Modernization and urbanization mean

that Russians have over the years been exposed to many of the same demilitarizing influences as their equivalents in the west. albeit of a peculiar kind. This process was greatly assisted by the futile and bloody war in Afghanistan. Most of Russian society today is profoundly cynical, individualist and materialist and exactly the reverse of nationalist, let alone militarist.

But here lies the problem for western analysts. Too many senior western analysts of Russia, most of whom were "experts" in Soviet studies, do not know contemporary Russian youth at all. They have never spent time in a Russian discotheque or night club, and they have never talked to young Russians about their real beliefs and aspirations.

It is, perhaps, hardly fair to expect these elderly professors and retired generals to have to jig around to Russian pop music. It is fair to ask some of the professional Russophobes, given their absence from the contemporary Russian scene, whether they should be a little less categorical about asserting that a basically unchanging Russian nation has a permanent commitment to

imperialism and conquest.

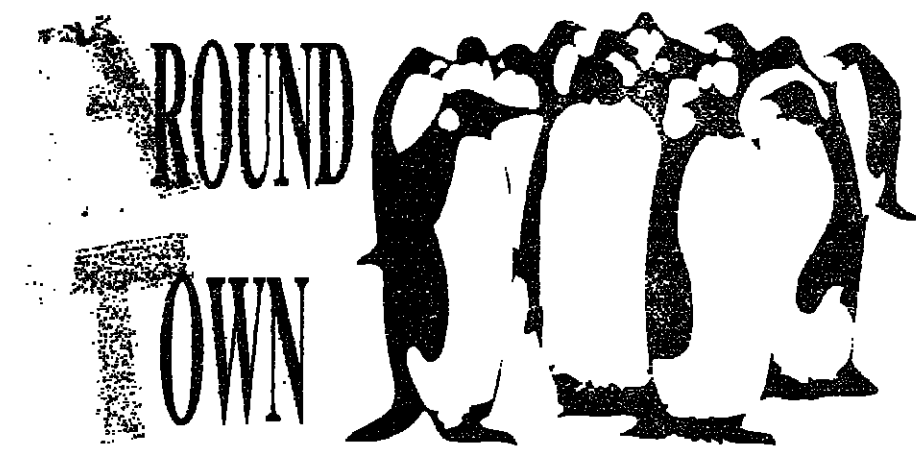
This stereotype of Russia is a virtual litany for many US commentators in particular. These views are a striking example of how, like the Cossacks, when a certain national stereotype has lasted long enough and taken sufficiently deep root, it can be almost impervious to evidence or rational argument.

As for the new Russian elite, it should be obvious that they have been obsessed with filling their own pockets at the expense of the Russian state, not with restoring it as a "great power."

There has certainly been no evidence of concern for the Russian armed forces in any of their actions. Under their rule, Russia has become a state for which no sane soldier would wish to die—certainly not to die without even being paid.

Anatol Lieven's *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, from which this article is condensed, is published by Yale University Press at £25 ■

Financial Times Syndication



'My Guest My Customer' workshop at Inter.Con

MY GUEST My Customer workshop was held last week at the Hotel InterContinental Jordan. The workshop was designed for newly hired staff in the Hotel, providing them with the knowledge necessary to give their guests the best service and make their stays as comfortable as possible. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. M. Nazzari, the hotel's training coordinator. At the end of the three-day workshop, the participants received a certificate from Kees Heuveling, the executive assistant manager.



A potpourri of events, exhibits

American arts festival has surprisingly regional flavor

By Kofi Attah
Special to The Star

The American Cultural Center has devoted considerable attention over the years to the indispensable role that the arts play in promoting understanding between peoples. The three-day American Arts Festival, held between last week and organized by the American Cultural Center under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor is a case in point.

The festival provided an excellent vehicle for fostering exactly that kind of understanding, especially since the presentations were not exclusively American, but were instead a blend of artistic tendencies that had an American, yet also a distinctively regional, flavor.

The festival featured two performances by guitarist Jad Azkoul—one of them a duet with oud player Sakher Hattar—and a lecture

entitled "Contemporary Arab Art in the U.S." given by Salwa Nashashibi, founder and curator of the International Council for Women in the Arts. The performances and lectures were put in perspective by tandem exhibits of the work of jewelry designer Suzanna El Masry and sculptor Samer Tabbaa.

For El Masry working in jewelry satisfies an essential need—her works are part of a constantly evolving creative process. "I don't like my work to look finished—I like to leave it somewhere between rough and classical. It must retain aspects of the crafting process that shows it has been hand-worked and it also has to have a human feel to it," she says. The 150-odd pieces of jewelry displayed in the inner hall of the American Cultural Center were nearly all made of silver. Indeed, Masry revealed that she "draws inspiration from silver."

The jewelry on display constituted earrings, necklaces, brooches, pins, pendants and rings. The variety of design in her earrings, especially, was a literal demonstration of her inventiveness as well as the craftsmanship it



Suzanna El Masry (above) and one of her bejewelled pieces (left)



took to make her ideas and the appropriate materials result in a beautiful yet clearly "worked" form—decorative art never had it so good.

Particularly notable in the display were the earrings with Sudanese beads, a triangular pair set with enamel, and another decorated with pure silver. And despite the fact she prefers to work in silver, there were several attractive pieces in gold plate, worked with blue and red enamels. Masry noted that very often, the choice of color of the stones she uses—as well as their raw shape—indicates a direction that leads the piece to its final form.

El Masry was born in Cairo and educated there until 1968. She completed an apprenticeship in jewelry making at the famous Khan El Khalili. In addition, she

studied painting and textile design in the U.S. at the Newark School for Fine and Industrial Arts. Today, her designs have earned her international acclaim, and she has had numerous exhibitions in Egypt, France, Turkey and the United States. Some of her works are on permanent display in Cairo and Paris.

Also on display in the Cultural Center were Samer Tabbaa's unusual sculptures. They provided an almost shocking contrast to Masry's intricate work. Tabbaa's pieces are, aside from being larger in the literal sense, also concerned with a much broader concept of "process." He has a very unique way of expressing what happens in real life. Tabbaa says his primary concern is with analyzing society, and this being the case, the material he uses in his work comes directly from the society he is living in. "My sculpture is motivated by my environment," he noted. "One work leads to another." Indeed, most of the 10 pieces he has on display in the outer hall of the Cultural Center are made from materials around him.

Sculpture number 1—"Railroad Track Series"—sculpted in 1997, was made of wood and cast lead. "Yarmouk River," a beautiful rose stone on display, was sculpted out of a magnificent stone from Irbid. One of the best of his pieces was a welded car bumper, which is one of Tabbaa's favorites, and which, he says, inspired him completely, and led down a number of new creative paths he hadn't previously imagined.

But it was the conspicuously attractive exhibit number 11—"4 Pencils"—that was the most impressive of all of Tabbaa's pieces. Made from tar, pigment and plywood, the four giant pencils projected upwards toward the sky, a clear sign of confidence and optimism.

Another piece, called simply "Red, Black and Blue" and made of painted wood in rectangular shapes, dominates the entire exhibition hall.

At Tabbaa was born in Taif in 1945 and



"4 Pencils" (left) made by sculptor Samer Tabbaa (above)

studied sociology, anthropology, fine arts and sculpture at Kent State University in the U.S. He has participated in several exhibitions, symposia and festivals in France, Lebanon, Bangladesh, Italy, and Spain. In 1989 he represented Jordan at the Barbican "Art of the Islamic Countries" exhibition.

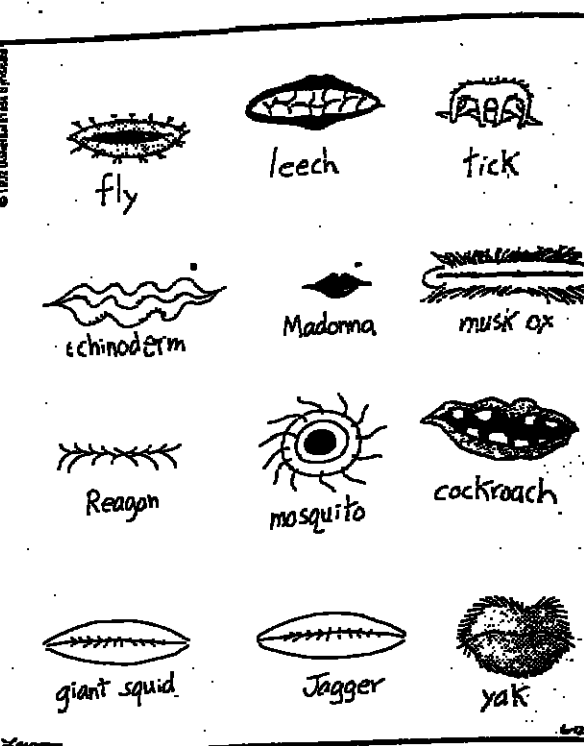
One of his best-known works is the sculptural waterfall project at the Second Circle in Amman.

He is married, and lives with his wife and two children in Mahes, Jordan where he also has his atelier.

The sculpture and jewelry exhibit—part of the three-day American Arts Festival—continues until 25 May at the American Cultural Center in Abdoon, daily except Fridays and Saturdays.

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



Lips of the animal kingdom



Every August, the flees would test their endurance in the grueling Tour de Frank.

AGENDA

■ **Homage to Federico Garcia Lorca**—The Spanish Cultural Center continues its homage to Andalusian poet Garcia Lorca with two films and one musical performance. Schedule as follows:

May 21—*La casa de Bernarda Alba* (1987). Bernarda Alba imposes an eight-year mourning period on herself and her four marriage-aged daughters after her husband dies. The film follows the degeneration of their inter-relationship during this period of time from a seemingly normal household into one half-crazed with morbid frustration. Dialog written by Lorca. In Spanish only, at Instituto Cervantes (near Third Circle, behind the Inter-Con Hotel), 5 pm.

May 28—*Bodas de sangre* (1936). Original film version of Lorca play, *Sacred drama* in which a bridegroom and the mysterious "Leonardo"—who has, it seems, an unclear yet intimate fascination with the bride—fight and mortally wound each other in her presence. In Spanish only, at Instituto Cervantes at 5 pm.

May 30—A theatrical performance based on traditional gypsy songs, entitled *Federico Garcia Lorca and Andalusia*, at the Royal Cultural Center, 8 pm.

■ **Exhibitions**

■ At Darat al Funun (Jabal Weibdeh), an exhibit of graphic and oil works on paper by Tunisian artist Guider Trid opens on May 25 at 6 pm. The show, comprising work done between 1973 and 1995, will run until June 26.

■ Berlin-based Syrian artist Marwan's show, "A Suite of Heads," continues through 28 May at Darat al Funun.

■ Lebanese-American artist and writer Etel Adnan's exhibit, "Artist's Books of Art and Poetry," runs until May 28 at Darat al Funun.

■ At the Goethe Institut, an exhibition of theater posters for Bertolt Brecht plays performed by the legendary theater group Berliner Ensemble until June 4, 1995 will run from May 17 to 28.

■ At The American Center: Exhibitions by jewelry artist Suzanna El Masry and sculptor Samer Tabbaa run until May 25.

■ An exhibition of materials relating to the work of French architect Christian de Portzamparc continues at the University of Jordan until June 4. Portzamparc's designs have become part of the urban landscape from New York to Paris to Tokyo.

■ **Lectures**

■ On May 27 at 5 pm, the American Center will present a media forum on Water Sector projects in Jordan being conducted by the US Agency for International Development. For details, call 592 0101, extension 2579.

■ The American Center (Abdoon), presents films with flowers as a theme: May 21—*Steel Magnolias*, starring Shirley MacLaine, Sally Field and Julia Roberts.

■ *Never Say Never Again*. Sean Connery as the ubiquitous 007 in a film suited with—what else?—girls, gadgets and gripping action. All of which Bond ("James Bond...") handles with his usual savoir faire. 7 pm.

■ *Touchdown On Bull Moon*. Children's film, recommended for ages 4 to 6. 6 pm.

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Local piano prodigy set to compete on world stage

By Anca de Maio
Special to The Star

In an unforgettable full house concert last Wednesday at the Royal Cultural Centre, Jordanian wonder child Karim Said performed a flawless program of classical, romantic and contemporary pieces, with a technique and "understanding" that astonished even the specialists attending the event. With a 12-piece repertoire including Bach, Clementi, Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin, the nine-year-old Karim reached the hearts of the public, who responded with thunderous applause. Encouraged by the audience's appreciation, Karim felt progressively more at ease on stage and displayed even more than his own unusually high level of virtuosity and musicality.

"Although he started a bit tensed, the performance as a whole was a success," commented Karim's teacher, piano faculty member of the National Music Conservatory Agnes Bashir. Karim looked very happy that so many grown-ups and children had come to see him. At the end of the concert, Karim's big smile and sparkling eyes expressed both his joy and surprise at the public's extremely warm response. "He's risen above all expectations," a Freddy for Music teacher said. "With every passing year this boy makes enormous progress in technique," music expert Jean-Claude Elias exclaimed.

Last Wednesday's performance is the "prelude" to Karim's participation in his first international competition in Romania in June. Demanding perfect concentration and great stamina, the non-stop one-hour concert was an excellent exercise for the first Jordanian pianist ever to participate in an international competition. Organized by the National Music Conservatory/Noor Al Hussein Foundation, in cooperation with the InterContinental Hotels of Amman and Bucharest, the concert was also meant to partially finance Karim's trip to Romania.

Born nine years ago on November 26 in Amman, Karim has grown up in a "pro-music" family environment. "My grandmother who



lives on the floor above is a jazz pianist and I have always liked listening to her," Karim said in explanation of how he was first attracted to the instrument. His father plays the guitar, but Karim chose the piano. Encouraged by his mother, at the age of five he started to take private lessons with Bashir. He became a student at the National Music Conservatory in September 1997, where he has since proved both his talent and commitment.

Currently in grade four at the Baccalaureate School, Karim is a child like all the others, but

his everyday program differs considerably from that of his friends. "There is commitment and sacrifice in doing one thing properly," stressed Dina Said, Karim's mother. "Parents in Amman register their children for all kinds of extra-curricular activities and don't let them miss one birthday party to which they are invited," she said, continuing emphatically that "In our case, piano comes at the cost of other things."

In general, Karim practices one hour daily. When he prepares a concert, the time allotted to

exercising is double. Karim knows that he is not supposed to play football and basketball, because they can cause him hand injuries that could ruin his career. "I don't have much free time," admits Karim with a smile. "But when I get some, I visit the classical music club on the Jordanian Internet. I play with my brother or I listen to music," he said with a sparkle in his big dark eyes. "I love jazz, pop and classical music, but I hate rap," he added.

"Talent alone is not enough to become a pianist," Bashir underscored. "The attention the child and his family pay to it is essential," she continued. "Talent is a piece of gold that you either craft into a jewel or not," his mother said in a determined voice. According to Bashir, Karim definitely has his family's moral support to chisel his talent and become a concert pianist. "Karim has achieved good classical techniques and is ready for the romantic period," Bashir announced. "We have just started approaching a little of Chopin, but we must be very careful with those techniques because they are very difficult for a child's hands."

The next step for Karim is a big one: moving onto the international stage. Competing with children his own age from Europe and other continents is the only means for him to get both a personal realistic evaluation on a European scale and a clear picture of what happens today in the music world. "The skills of a pianist have to do with more than simply running your fingers up and down the keys," Bashir pointed out.

Concentration, understanding, interpretation, musicality, visual memory, and perfect pitch are as important as technique, and at his young age Karim has already proven that he has all of them.

Determined to become a career pianist, he is aware that polishing his enormous raw talent will take time, commitment and lots of love and support. "Although I do not want to procrastinate, I think that everything will go just fine in Bucharest," Ms Bashir said.

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The Star's TV GUPE

Programs on JTV from 23—29 May

ENGLISH PROGRAMS

SATURDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Johnny Quest
3:30—I Wanna Be...
4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Ocean Wilds
5:00—French Program
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—Discovery Magazine
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—You Bet Your Life
8:00—Cinema, Cinema
8:30—Prism
9:10—Sirens
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *Sweet Dreams*, starring: Tiffani Amber and David Newsom
12:00—Are You Being Served

SUNDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—The Pumpkin Patch
3:30—The Pink Panther
3:30—Skippy
4:00—The American Chart Show
5:00—In The Wild
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—A Tour in France
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Life's most Embarrassing Moments
8:00—Taste of Africa
8:30—Challenges
9:10—Renegade
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Correlli
11:10—The Nanny

MONDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Fred and Barney Show
3:30—Raider of the South Pacific
4:00—Neighbors
4:30—Last Frontiers



Taste of Africa, Sunday at 8:00 pm.

5:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Hope and Gloria
8:00—Perspective
9:10—99-1 "Stone"
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Law and Order
11:10—Bay Watch Nights

TUESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Pro Star

3:30—Small Talk
4:00—Bordertown
4:30—The Health Show
5:00—Route of Capricorn
6:00—French Program
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Step by Step
8:00—What would you do
8:30—Rhodes
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Feature Film: *The Lottery*, starring: Dan Cortese

Amman cinemas

● Philadelphia I (Tel: 4634149):
The Jackal
● Philadelphia II (Tel: 4634149):
Liar-Liar
● Galleria I (Tel: 079 33430): The Mirror Has Two Faces
The Preacher's Wife / Titanic
● Galleria II (Tel: 079 33430): Shadow Conspiracy
● Plaza (Tel: 5699238): Titanic
● Concord I (Tel: 5677420): The Relic
● Concord II (Tel: 5677420): Kananama (Arabic)

and Veronica Cartwright
12:00—Metro Café

WEDNESDAY

3:00—Holy Koran
3:10—Mr. Bogus Show
3:30—Castle of Adventure
4:00—The Album Show
5:00—French Program
6:00—Acapulco Bay
7:00—News in French
7:15—French Programs
7:30—News Headlines
7:35—Buddies
8:00—Envoy Special
9:10—Kung Fu
10:00—News At Ten
10:30—Nutcracker (Mini Series)

PROGRAMMES EN FRANÇAIS

SAMEDI

17:00—Faut pas rêver
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Magazine
L'œuf de Colomb

DIMANCHE

18:00—Bonne espérance
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

LUNDI

17:00—Thalassie
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Cinq sur Cinq

MARDI

18:00—Les cœurs brûlés (4)
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Fractales

MERCREDI

18:00—Ushuaia
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—E-M6

JEUDI

16:10—L'école des fans
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Atomes crochus

VENDREDI

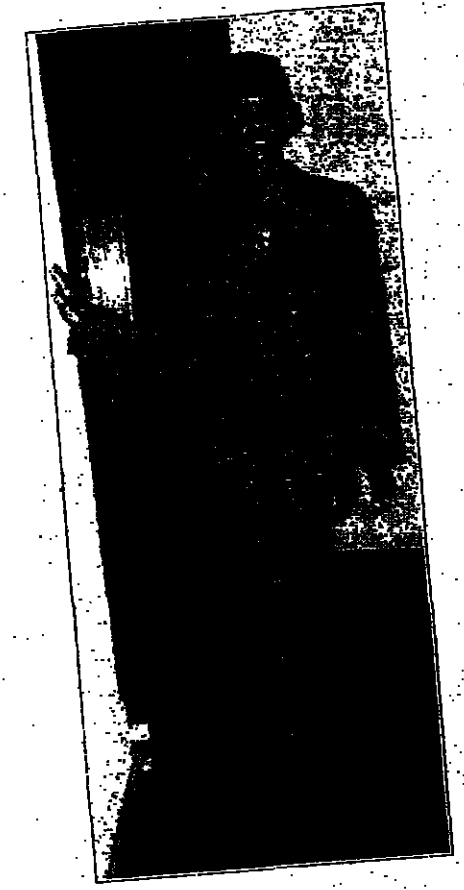
17:30—Fort Boyard
19:00—Le Journal
19:15—Allô la Terre

Programs are subject to change by JTV

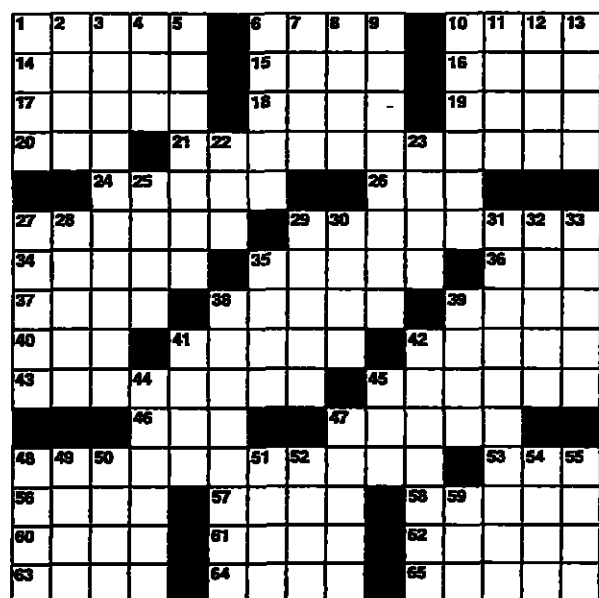
Fashion



Autumn 1997-1998



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—THIS WEEK'S—
HOROSCOPE

By Linda Black

Weekly Tip: The sun's in Gemini, excellent for scholars of all sorts. Study finances while the Moon's in thrifty Taurus.

Aries (March 21-April 19). Gather what's owed to you. Take care of a friend's needs. Be compassionate, even if you don't understand completely.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). You're decisive but could be talked into being foolish. Watch your money, if you're on a tight budget.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Pay back an old debt. You'll be full of new schemes. Launch into as many as possible. Even try something impossible.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Friends give you the inside scoop. Keep it to yourself or it'll be all over town. Act on your secret information.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Don't be late to work, or there'll be trouble. Your friends demand all your time and attention. Do your best to accommodate them. Guilt may be a burden.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Decide so you'll have your plan ready. It's confusing, but you can hold your own. You and your friends will be sure of what you want.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Pay bills so you'll know how much you have left. You'll get the chance to see new things and go new places.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Decide with your mate so you can go shopping. You'll spend money like it was water, if you're not careful.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Work hard so you can get off early. You and a friend want to compete with each other and you'll leave the others far behind.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). True love beckons but other assignments get in the way. You're kept hopping but you may find some time for your best friend.

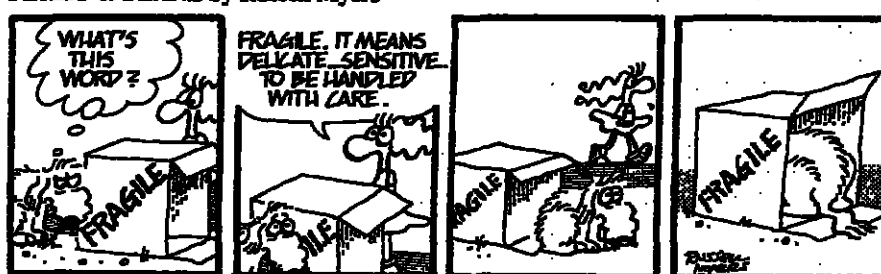
Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You'll have to get back to work. Confer with a friend on household chores and reach a better arrangement.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). A neighbor's advice could save you a bundle. Pay attention, instead of paying top dollar. Chaos at home leads to a better arrangement all around.

If You're Having a Birthday This Week: This year starts slow, but picks up speed. Pay attention, so you'll arrive safely where you want to go. You can do amazing things. Decide what you want to accomplish and then learn what you need to know.

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PERKY & BEANZ by Russell Myers



ELWOOD by Ben Templeton & Tom Forman



CATFISH by Fred Wagner & Tom Cone



Jumble

Unscramble these four words, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

VELOC
LALAM
ETEELY
TIENIF



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoons.

Print answer here: " " OF " "

— was —

ANSWER: CLOVE LITAM EYELET FINITE

Would You Believe...

Eyeglasses did not come into use until the 14th century in Europe.

More than 600 racetrack fans died after a grandstand collapsed Feb. 26, 1916, in Hong Kong.

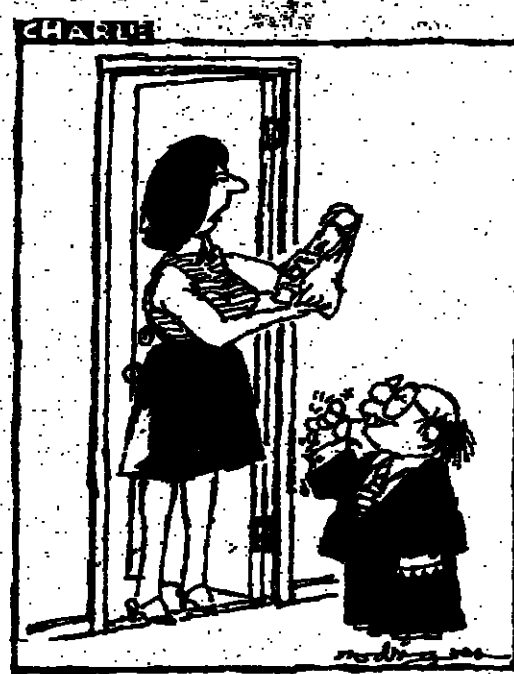
More than likely, you've suffered at least a bout or two of reflux esophagitis. That's the fancy name for heartburn.

Christopher Columbus made a total of four trips to the New World.

The month of July is named after Julius Caesar. August is named after Augustus Caesar.

Mitchell is the highest U.S. mountain east of the Mississippi River.

Actress Debbie Reynolds was named Miss Burbank of 1948.



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NBA Games, Thursday at 5:00 pm.

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Russian oriental carpet trade frayed by peace

By Vanora Bennett

DERBENT, Russia—Under the fortress walls, the merchants of this honey-colored stone city on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, at the crossroads of three empires, are doing what their ancestors have done for 800 years—laying out hand-woven carpets for sale.

During centuries of conflict under Persian, Turkish and Russian empires, rug salesmen here traditionally have done lucrative business by buying family carpets from refugees on the run from warfare across the Caucasus Mountains and along the shores of the Caspian.

But something disastrous has started to happen to the region's hand-made carpet trade in the last two years: Peace keeps breaking out.

"Look at it now," says weebegone trader Magomed Magomedov, forlornly gesturing around.

Just a dozen carpets are pinned up outside the north side of the long defensive wall that Derbent's one-time Persian masters built in the 6th century. A half dozen men, all with the same mournful expression, are waiting for buyers.

The region's carpet-making legacy from the great carpet cultures of Persia and Turkey was institutionalized under Soviet rule. Factories mass-produced carpets with approximately traditional designs, although village women went on weaving their own and giving dowries of carpets at marriage—a practice frowned on by Communist Party bosses.

But the bonanza years for carpet dealers were right after the Soviet Union collapsed. The lands around Russia's southern border, a tinderbox of Christian and Muslim ethnic groups with long memories for old feuds, went up in flames. In the five years after the Soviet collapse, there were conflicts between Armenians and Azerbaijanis, Georgians and Abkhazian separatists, and Russians and Chechen separatists.

In the early 1990s, more than one million people fled shattered villages and towns, taking with them only their bedding and carpets—many of which they were forced to sell.

But now stability is returning to the region. The wars have stopped, or been suspended. The refugees have sold their rugs, and many have found new homes and jobs; so have many of the traders from those days.

The only carpets being made by hand and sold in Derbent are those of women here in the multi-ethnic republic of Dagestan. But this domestic weaving was never intended as a money-making business and is done more for private, family purposes.

Magomedov's wife, Asli, wrapped in scarf and enveloping clothes, is one of the weavers. She has just dismantled the huge loom that stood all winter in front of the family television set. She's

planning to start weaving again in the fall.

Some of the Magomedovs' carpets are dowry offerings from the family's two new daughters-in-law. A betrothed woman's family still must provide at least one big carpet, a flat-weave rug, a runner and a half dozen cushions. The designs should be her own.

According to legends, the first question a matchmaker would ask a potential bride was: "How well can you weave?"

Traditional Caucasus carpets differ in design from village to village. They include both Persian motifs—intricate floral patterns—and wilder, brighter Turkish-influenced designs, with jagged flame-like shapes inspired by the region's plentiful supplies of oil and gas and its long-vanished religion of fire worship.

Asli loves weaving. She collects templates—patterns drawn with tiny crosses on squared paper—just as some Western women collect knitting patterns. She studies them in her free moments, contemplating her next adventure in quiet creativity.

But, she complains, her work doesn't bring in much money. The most she can expect her husband to get for this winter's rug, measuring 6 feet by 10, is \$600.

"Four of us worked on it for six months," she laments. "And that means we only earned \$25 a month each. A pittance."

The worst blow of all to the trade is the flippancy with which post-Soviet Dagestanis have begun to treat their traditions.

Although it's still considered crucial to transfer from family to family at marriage, her husband says, it's no longer a matter of pride to give the most beautiful and costly weaving possible.

And Russia's opening of its borders means that there's now new competition in the rug business from an unexpected quarter: the West.

Inside Derbent's city walls a flourishing trade is now going on in cheap Belgian or Belorussian carpets made with synthetic fibers.

These brownish rugs, with large swirly patterns are displayed on clotheslines or cars. Surly traders with none of the traditional carpet salesman's patter say they buy them from four or five big warehouses in Moscow and bring them down to the south for sale.

They cost only one-fifth as much as hand-woven rugs.

"So what do people do before a wedding?" Magomedov asks with a mixture of indignation and resignation. "They know they've got to give carpets. But they couldn't care less what kind. So they get the cheapest possible Belgian thing and palm it off on their new family. For people like that, respect for tradition is becoming no more than a formality."

By Karlyn Barker

FRANK SINATRA, hailed as a versatile crooner whose unique sound and intimate style made him this century's acknowledged master of popular song during a career that spanned nearly 60 years, died Thursday night at a Los Angeles hospital after a heart attack. He was 82.

Sinatra won nine Grammys, recorded more than 2,000 songs and made 240 albums. From his 1939 "All or Nothing at All" to his 1994 "Duets II," he performed an impressive repertoire of 20th-century popular vocal music, often choosing tunes and lyrics that expressed his emotional ups and downs. He also made more than 30 films, including "From Here to Eternity," for which he won the Academy Award for best supporting actor in 1953, and "The Man with the Golden Arm," for which he received an Oscar nomination.

Famous for his intensely personal interpretation of lyrics, he sang songs—aching, bitter-sweet love ballads and cocky, swinging renditions of old standards—with peerless phrasing and intimacy.

Sinatra first came to musical prominence in the early 1940s as the slender, sunken-cheeked singing idol whose screaming fans erupted in a hysteria matched later only by Elvis Presley and the Beatles. After a slump in popularity, the scrappy entertainer made a stunning professional comeback in the mid-1950s, recording some of his best albums and winning his Academy Award for dramatic acting.

After dominating the music business, movies and Las Vegas, he quit performing briefly in 1971, then re-emerged in 1973 to enjoy continued concert and recording success as "Ol' Blue Eyes." He last performed in public in February 1995 at his annual charity golf tournament in Palm Springs, California, but seldom left his Beverly Hills home after suffering a heart attack in January 1997.

He was almost as well known for his temper and run-ins with the media. Yet he also was generous and kind to friends and strangers, everyone from US presidents and other leading entertainers to children he never met but whose hospital bills he frequently paid. But in the end, it was as a

straight-on singer that the once skinny, bow-tied kid from Hoboken, New Jersey, gained his lasting, worldwide renown.

"Frank Sinatra was a true original," singer and lyricist Mel Tormé said Friday. "He held the patent, the original blueprint on singing and the popular song, a man who would have thousands of imitators but who, himself, would never be influenced by a single, solitary person."

As news of Sinatra's death spread across the country and around the world, tributes to the singer once known simply as "The Voice" poured in from President Clinton, fellow entertainers and sorrowful fans—some of whom rushed to record stores to snap up the last Sinatra compact discs. "I think every American would have to say he really did 'do it his way,'" Clinton said from Birmingham, England, where he is attending an economic summit. "I was an enormous admirer of his."

To his fans, among them Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, U2's Bono, Bob Dylan and Little Richard, Sinatra had no equal. In 1995, to mark his 80th birthday, admirers as musically diverse as Bruce Springsteen, Tony Bennett and Sili-N-Papa paid tribute in a special televised concert.

The pure artistry of his voice and the freedom in his singing are unmatched," Springsteen said at the time, describing Sinatra's singing as "filled with an attitude, life, beauty, excitement, sex and a sad knowledge of the ways of the world."

His music "became synonymous with the black tie, the good life, the best booze, women, sophistication, (but) his blues voice was always the sound of hard luck and men late at night with the last \$10 in their pockets trying to figure a way out," he said.

Singer Barbra Streisand said Friday that Sinatra "was the epitome of what singing is all about, beautiful sound, smooth as silk, effortless, impeccable phrasing, stylish, intelligent and full of heart."

Leonard Slatkin, the National Symphony Orchestra conductor whose parents frequently backed Sinatra on recordings in the 1950s and 1960s, called him "the most dominant, most influential



vocalist of the 20th century in pop culture," Sinatra, he said, "had a far greater influence than Presley because of how broad his music was. (He) would take one song and refine and change it over 40 years. He brought the same discipline to 'I've Got You Under My Skin' that Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau brought to Schubert Lieder."

His classic recordings include: "I'll Never Smile Again," "I'll Be Seeing You," "Witchcraft," "I've Got You Under My Skin," and "My Way," for a time his personal anthem.

Tormé's views aside, Sinatra always credited singers Billie Holiday and Bing Crosby as influencing his musical style. Analyzing his success in a 1963 Playboy magazine interview, he said: "It's because I got an audience involved, personally involved, in a song—because I'm involved myself... Whatever else has been said about me personally is unimportant. When I sing, I believe. I'm honest."

He married four times, and

his former wives included actresses Ava Gardner and Mia Farrow.

Sinatra had a legendary appreciation for a good lyric and co-wrote two of his early hits, "This Love of Mine" and "I'm a Fool to Want You." He preferred the sophisticated songwriting work of Jerome Kern, Cole Porter, Ira Gershwin, Richard Rodgers and Sammy Cahn, and he recorded with some of the top arrangers and conductors in show business, among them Sy Oliver, Nelson Riddle, Gordon Jenkins and Count Basie.

Francis Albert Sinatra was born December 12, 1915, the only child of Anthony and "Dolly" Sinatra, both natives of Italy. His father, a former bantamweight fighter, was a member of the Hoboken fire department. His mother was a nurse and Democratic ward leader. Sinatra dropped out of high school, where he sang in the glee club during his sophomore year, and later worked as a truck loader and copy boy at a local newspaper.

But impressed by Crosby's success, Sinatra began entering singing contests. In 1935, the Hoboken Four, with him as lead singer, won first prize of the Major Bowes Amateur Hour radio broadcast. He was working as a \$25-a-week singer at the Rustic Cabin in Alpine, New Jersey, in 1939 when band leader Harry James caught his act and signed him to a \$75-a-week contract.

In 1940, he joined Tommy Dorsey's band.

"We were on stage when Tommy made the announcement for Sinatra's first appearance," singer Jo Stafford recalled. "As Frank came up to the mike, I just thought, 'Hmmm, kinda thin.' But by the end of eight bars, I was thinking, 'This is the greatest sound I've ever heard.' But he had more. You knew he couldn't do a number badly."

Dorsey teamed Sinatra with the band's Pied Pipers quartet, and their 1940 recording of "I'll Never Smile Again" became Number 1. Critics and the public started to take notice of the lead singer, a skinny bantam in oversized bow ties.

It was during this period that Sinatra developed his distinctive singing style—by copying Dorsey's unusual way of phrasing with his trombone. He learned the technique of breathing in the middle of a note, so he could slide smoothly from one note to the next and preserve the continuity of a lyric.

Sinatra quit Dorsey's band in 1942. His first solo engagement was at New York's Paramount Theatre, where the 27-year-old was deemed a sensation by World War II-husied hobbyists. A press agent later conceded that at least part of the Paramount hysteria was staged.

"We hired girls to scream when he scolded a note," the agent said. "But the girls we hired in scream swarmed, and hundreds more we didn't hire swooned with them."

Trying to explain Sinatra's influence, blues singer Joe Williams said in a recent magazine interview that "Frank's personal interpretation of a lyric (is) like people who read poetry, or an actor in a role. With Frank, each song is a vignette of the story, and he tells it like nobody else."

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The Star

Edited by Abdul Hamid Adasi

No guarantees for goal king Batistuta

PARIS—Gabriel Batistuta's hat-trick for Argentina against Bosnia will no doubt help the striker in his fight for a place in coach Daniel Passarella's World Cup starting line-up. But in an interview published on Friday, the day after Argentina's 5-0 win in their warm-up in Cordoba, Batistuta admitted he was unhappy at having to prove his worth despite being his country's greatest-ever goal scorer.

"It's not a comfortable situation," he said. "I think I'm playing well, I have a (successful) career behind me and a long history with the national team. I would like to be going to the World Cup in a different atmosphere." Batistuta told the French sports daily L'Equipe. "But that's the way it is... I'll go to the World Cup and try to win my place in training, added the Fiorentina striker.

Batistuta, who scored four goals at his first World Cup in the United States in 1994, took his tally for Argentina to a remarkable 41 goals in 58 matches on Wednesday. Dismissed by Passarella for most of last year's World Cup qualifying games, Batistuta admits



Batistuta

he considered quitting international football. "I felt bad with my place in doubt," he said. "But a World Cup is something very important for a player and I decided to take my chances."

Batistuta craves a second shot at winning the World Cup

after the bitter-sweet experience of four years ago. Argentina were eliminated 3-2 by Romania in the second round after captain Diego Maradona was suspended for failing a dope test. "In 1994 we had a team that could have won the title," Batistuta said. "But we found it very hard to bear the shock of his suspension. 'To have such a good chance then blow it like that was a real shame, not least because I could also have finished as top scorer.'"

Whatever happens in France, Batistuta looks certain to quit Fiorentina before the start of next season. English giants Manchester United have expressed an interest, but Batistuta sees his immediate future with another Italian team. "I want to stay in Italy because it's the best league in the world, but I need a bigger club than Fiorentina," he said. Batistuta does not rule out a move to England in the future, adding: "I hope to play in Europe for another three or four years. In Italy two years, then in England to perfect my English."

Toefling gets surprise call for Danish squad

COPENHAGEN—Denmark coach Bo Johansson on Monday selected MSV Duisburg midfielder Stig Toefling for the Danes' World Cup warm-up friendly against Sweden on May 28. Toefling, whose last international appearance was at the European Championships in June 1996, was the only surprise in the 17-strong squad for the away game.



Danish coach Johansson

with the hosts and Saudi Arabia and South Africa. It is to be named on June 1.

Denmark's squad against Sweden on May 28 in Malmö is as follows:

Goalkeepers: Peter Schmeichel (Manchester United), Mogens Krogh (Brøndby).

Defenders: Jes Hoegh (Fenerbahce), Marc Rieper (Glasgow Celtic), Michael Schjoberg (FC Kaiserslautern), Jan Heintze (Bayer Leverkusen), Jacob Laursen (Derby).

Midfielders: Thomas Helveg (Udinese), Stig Toefling (MSV Duisburg), Per Frandsen (Bolton), Allan Nielsen (Tottenham), Morten Wieghorst (Glasgow Celtic), Michael Laudrup (Ajax Amsterdam), Martin Joergensen (Udinese).

Forwards: Miklos Molnar (FC Seville), Peter Moeller (PSV Eindhoven), Brian Laudrup (Glasgow Rangers).

Klinsmann: No problems playing with Matthaeus

BONN—Juergen Klinsmann promised he would have no problems with Lothar Matthaeus as the two boarded a plane taking Germany's World Cup squad to a training camp in Finland on Monday.

"As in 1990, we have a goal in common and that is to win the World Cup," said Klinsmann. "It worked perfectly well then." The two players fell out badly when they played together at Bayern Munich and are still some way from being described as friends.

The 37-year-old Matthaeus, who earned the last of his record 122 caps in December 1994, was named by coach Berti Vogts in the 22-man

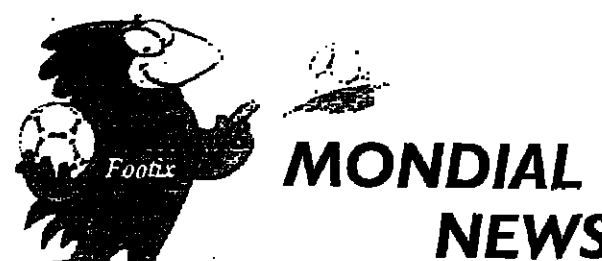
World Cup squad following the injury of first choice libero Matthias Sammer.

There were only 18 players on the plane from Frankfurt to Helsinki after Olaf Thon and Steffen Freund were held up by traffic and missed the flight. They are expected to take another plane later on Monday. Ulinse striker Oliver Bierhoff and AC Milan's Christian Ziege were flying straight from Italy.

The training camp in Finland will end on May 27 with a friendly against Finland in Helsinki. Two further friendlies follow in Germany—against Colombia on May 30 in Frankfurt and Luxembourg on June 5 in Mannheim.



Juergen Klinsmann



Diplomatic feet

ROME—Iran vs the United States at the World Cup could be a nightmare for politicians, but not for the players, says Iran's national team coach, Tomislav Ivic. The United States and Iran have not had diplomatic relations since 1979, when militants stormed the US Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

That doesn't worry Ivic, a Croat who was hired by Iran in January. "I think our game with the Americans will be a normal game. I think both teams will exchange jerseys at the end of the game. And like all other games, what's important is to have a good result," said Ivic. "We know how the US plays and I think we will do OK."

Zamorano and Salas are back

SANTIAGO, Chile—They're back together again. After starring for Inter Milan in the UEFA Cup final, Chilean striker Ivan Zamorano is set to take on Argentina in a World Cup warm-up and team with Marcelo Salas for the first time in almost a year.

Team doctor Eugenio Valdecanos said Zamorano had recovered from a pain to his right knee as a result of a ball that hit him during a practice session. The striker was spared from training for four days, but was back working with his teammates Friday.



Salas

Owen expects substitute role

LIVERPOOL, England—Michael Owen expects to be on the bench when England starts its World Cup challenge. The youngest player this century to make his debut for England, Owen tied for top scorer in the Premier League at age 18. He doesn't think coach Glenn Hoddle will split up the tried and trusted strike force he's already got, however. "Alan Shearer and Teddy Sheringham have been the main strike force for England for the past couple of years, so it would be a hard act to break up the two of them," the Liverpool striker said Friday. "I wouldn't expect to break that partnership up immediately and I'll just be happy if I get into the squad, as that would be an achievement itself," said Owen, who scored 18 Premier League goals for Liverpool in his first season. "Coming on as a substitute would be a bonus."

"Beast" gets his flex on film

TOKYO—The man behind the golden goal that's taking Japan to its first World Cup is now pushing a watch. Masayuki Okano, the 25-year-old

substitute forward nicknamed "the beast" because he supposedly runs faster than a dog, shot to stardom with his extra-time goal in Japan's 3-2 win against Iran. Okano even caught the eye of some soccer-loving Swiss executives in Switzerland, who happened to be watching the game on TV. Next month Okano will appear in print ads in Japan, naked to the waist, hair down to his shoulders, flexing his biceps to show off the \$70 watch called "Goal," which has a soccer ball design on the wristband.

Shearer's frustration shows

LONDON—Alan Shearer's performance in Saturday's FA Cup final summed up a season in which the England captain's fortunes have contrasted as sharply as the black and white stripes on his Newcastle shirt. Shearer was outstanding on the occasions he was on the pitch, but he also displayed the kind of petulance that could cost him and his country dear at the World Cup finals in France.

Just before half-time, Shearer lunged recklessly at Tony Adams close to the touchline and was booked. It was undoubtedly an act born of frustration, Adams having obstructed him in the penalty area seconds earlier. But it was by no means the first time this season that Shearer, once the iceman of English soccer, has lost his cool and taken action against defenders. Last week, Shearer was cleared by the Football Association of deliberately kicking an opponent in the head during a premier league match between Newcastle and Leicester in another touchline fracas.

Shearer, who said the Lennon incident looked far worse on television than it did on the pitch, was quick to admit his guilt over the Adams incident.

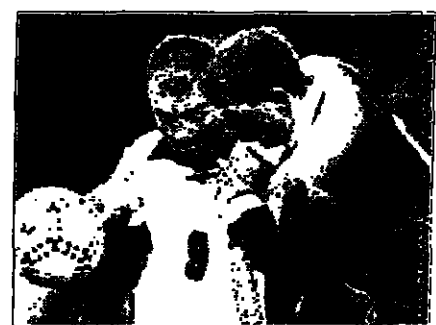
"I told Tony Adams I was sorry after the game," he said. "I don't feel I made contact but wanted to be certain everything was okay with him."

Frustrating is the word that best sums up Shearer's season. The first twist came literally in a pre-season friendly against Chelsea when he damaged ankle ligaments so badly it was January before he played again.

When he did return, Shearer found himself in a Newcastle side struggling for form and haunted by the threat of relegation. He scored, of course, even if it was only against non-league Stevenage in the FA Cup. The England striker found it harder to impress in the premier league on a team clearly lacking in confidence, and questions were asked over whether he had recovered the laser-sharp pace and power that saw him dominate English soccer's top flight in recent seasons.

Two superb goals in England's flattering 3-0 victory over Portugal at Wembley did much to dispel the doubts. And having scored the goal against Sheffield United that took Newcastle to the Cup final, Saturday's performance against Arsenal showed Shearer was approaching his best. Despite being starved of service for most of the match, Shearer pounced on a second-half blunder by Martin Keown with the appetite of man making up for lost time. An instant shot with his supposedly weaker left foot left Arsenal's England goalkeeper, David Seaman, beaten only for the ball to cannon back off the inside of the post. Arsenal coach Arsene Wenger is in no doubt of Shearer's quality. But he also pointed out the deficiency in temperament of a player fundamental to England's World Cup hopes.

"He is the most effective striker in England," the Frenchman said. "He was our biggest threat, but he got frustrated in the first half and lost a bit of his self control." England fans will be hoping Shearer regains that self-control in time for France '98.



Shearer

England rallies behind hocus pocus

LONDON—England used to go to the World Cup with burly defenders, bustling strikers, speedy wingers and crunching tucklers.

This time the squad has dazzling dribblers, confident passers and intelligent midfielders—and a faith healer. When the English squad arrives in France for the June 10-July 12 tournament, the cameras won't necessarily be chasing Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne, star striker Alan Shearer or even coach Glenn Hoddle. They'll be searching for Eileen Drewery.

Hoddle, a devoted Christian, announced before a warm-up game against Portugal last month that the faith healer had been hired to help the team overcome injuries and psychological worries. "She's been working with some of the players for the last 18 months," he said. "Around three quarters of the team have been to see her at one time or another."

The coach said he's had experience with her work for more than 20 years. "I went to see her with a torn hamstring and I'd been told it



would be easier to fight weeks before I could play again," Hoddle said. "After seeing her, after two or three days I was back in training."

Hoddle's decision was ridiculed by the media and spawned a string of humorous stories, cartoons and head-

lines about the coach's faith and Drewery's special healing powers. The coach's credibility wasn't helped when a psychic claimed he had smuggled the World Cup trophy into his home to energize it in England's favor and had sprinkled crystals on the field in Mar-

seille so that magical powers would help the team beat Tunisia in its World Cup opener on June 15.

England will know by June 22, when the team has played Romania in its second match, whether the additional powers have worked, or whether the

team needs some kind of miracle to stay in the tournament.

England should beat Tunisia, but then come tougher matches against the Romanians, who had the best qualification record of any team, and the Colombians, who were ousted by the United States in 1994. Colombia has a lot to prove and should be a far better team this time. When England gained a tough 0-0 tie in Italy to clinch a place among the 32 finalists, there was an air of euphoria in the so-called motherland of soccer. England appeared to have all the attributes of a World Cup winner.

The team had a world-class goalkeeper in David Seaman, hardworking, inspirational midfielders such as Paul Ince, young, effervescent players such as David Beckham and Paul Scholes and razor-sharp strikers in Shearer and 18-year-old Michael Owen.

It also had Gascoigne, a player of exceptional match-turning talent who was one of the eye-catching stars of the 1990 World Cup in Italy, where England reached the semifinal.

Rival coaches admitted they now admired England for its newfound technical ability and the fact that it had finally shrugged off of its stereotypical long-ball style, which failed to get the team to the 1994 World Cup.

Yet instead of building on that wave of optimism and praise, England seems to have slipped back into some of its old ways. Their pre-World Cup form has been puzzlingly poor. Because of injuries, Hoddle sent out an improvised lineup against World Cup-bound Chile in February and lost 2-0 at Wembley.

The depression deepened after a tame 1-1 tie with non-qualifier Switzerland in Bern outside of Tunisia, playing professionally in Portugal and, until last year, the J-League in Japan. He returned home last summer to sign for Espanerale and has since helped the club to win an African cup title last year and the domestic league championship earlier this month. It would be something of a fairy tale story if the aging veteran could motivate his youthful compatriots with some vital goals.

But Tunisia's probable ambition is a point or two and to avoid humiliation. They have a static defence, which will be Kasperczak's primary concern against the likes of Faustino Asprilla, Alan Shearer and George Hagi.

Creative midfielders Zoubier Beya and Adel Sellimi, the top scorer in qualifying, together with the talented Skander Souayah and tricky winger Mehdi Ben Slimane are their best hope for goals.

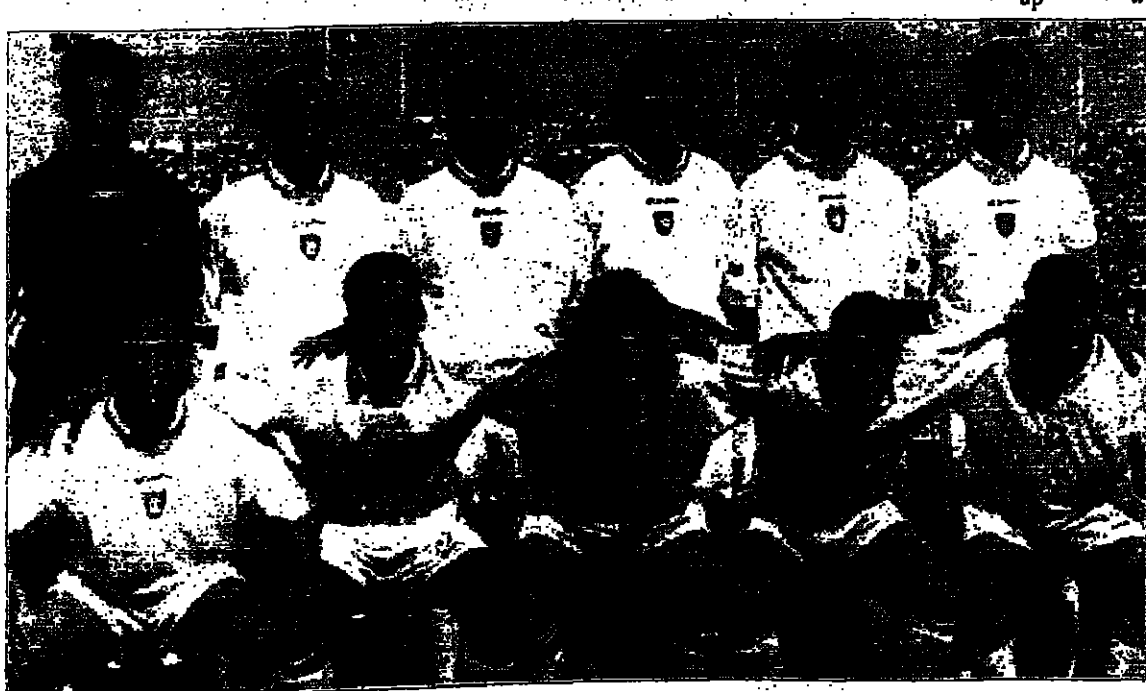
Discipline is also a factor. At the Olympic Games in Atlanta two years ago, Tunisia destroyed their chances with undisciplined performances that saw them earn more red cards than goals. Most of those under-23 players are at the basis of the national team and will hopefully have learnt their lessons before their first match against England on June 15.



Tunisian coach Kasperczak

very consistent two years ago but has been showing signs of wear and tear over the last 12 months. The Polish-born coach's problems have also been exacerbated by the injury of new find Hassan Gabali, who looks likely to miss the tournament.

Gabali was the one bright hope that Tunisia had in February, when they suffered a humiliating elimination by Burkina Faso in the Nations Cup quarter-finals. The balding midfielder was named among the tournament's best 11 players but suffered an injury playing for his club Esperance a month later and will most likely not be available for the trip to France. Kasperczak now has to look else-



TUNIS—Tunisia set new standards for Africa the last time they were at the World Cup 20 years ago, but this time face being one of the whipping boys at the finals in France.

The Tunisians were the first African team to win a match in the World Cup finals when they beat Mexico in the tournament in Argentina in 1978. The victory over Mexico in Rosario proved a massive boost for African confidence and laid the foundation for improved performances by other teams from the continent in subsequent tournaments.

But Tunisia's hopes of reaping those benefits themselves in France two decades later

have been drastically reduced, by the tough opening round group they have been drawn in. The north Africans face Colombia, England and Romania in an exceedingly difficult Group G and have little realistic chance of finishing in the top two and reaching the knock-out second round.

Although competent and cunning in the qualifying campaign, there have been few signs to suggest that the Tunisians will stand any chance of causing upsets in their matches in Marseille, Montpellier and the Stade de France.

They qualified unbeaten, with a narrow

Le Jourdain

Supplément en français du Star

Société

Amour avant mariage : la révolution silencieuse

Cent soixante jeunes de 18 à 28 ans ont accepté de répondre à nos questions sur les rapports amoureux entre hommes et femmes avant le mariage. Leurs réactions sont variées, parfois contradictoires mais offrent des pistes pour mieux comprendre la jeunesse actuelle.

Selon les résultats du questionnaire (voir ci-dessous), on se rend compte que plus de la moitié des jeunes interrogés (60%) fréquentent ou ont déjà fréquenté une personne de l'autre sexe avant les noces. Pour Mousa Shtewi, docteur en sociologie, ce constat est inévitable : « Le type des relations dépend bien entendu de l'éducation du couple et de leur situation socio-économique. Mais à mon avis, ces relations sont une conséquence normale de l'environnement mixte. Sur-tout quand les familles sont plus permissives, ces relations émergent plus facilement ».

Reste que souvent les jeunes des deux sexes préfèrent préserver leur jardin secret : 54% avouent avoir ou avoir eu une relation (en toute amitié) sans qu'ils aient éprouvé le besoin d'en toucher deux mots à leur famille. En fait rien ne les pousse vraiment à jouer la transparence puisqu'une fois sur deux les parents, mis au

courant, leur interdisent de se revoir. Un désaccord d'autant plus fréquent quand il s'agit des filles comme le constate Mousa Shtewi : « Cela reflète la perception toujours négative à l'égard de la femme qui s'engage dans une relation avec un homme. C'est une notion que les parents transmettent à leurs enfants dès leur plus jeune âge. En Jordanie, on pense toujours aux conséquences des relations. Les parents tremblent donc davantage pour leur fille que pour leur fils : « Et si le garçon en abuse ? Et sa réputation ? ».

Selon notre petite étude, les jeunes Jordaniens semblent moins attachés que leurs aînés à la tradition puisque 61% des garçons prétendent respecter une fille qui fréquente avant le mariage. Le docteur en sociologie reste sceptique : « En pratique, je crois que les jeunes gens sont autoritaires à l'égard des femmes ou des filles de la famille ». Effectivement, ils sont 65% à admettre ne pas tolérer que leur sœur sorte avec un homme avant d'enfiler la robe blanche. Le regard de la société reste très fon et le double langage à propos des relations entre hommes et femmes, répandu.

Mousa Shtewi se veut cependant optimiste : « Nous sommes en train de vivre une révolution silencieuse dans nos relations sociales, une modernisation surtout urbaine d'ailleurs ».

comme à Amman. Peu à peu la lutte des jeunes pour le changement apparaît au grand jour même si en fait il y en a encore beaucoup qui ont des relations dont on ne sait rien. En ce sens, peut-on dire que la société jordanienne est en train de tisser des relations, en-dehors d'une conception dépassée du couple ? Évidemment, précise le sociologue Majid El-deen Khairi, nous adoptons sans doute un schéma de relations entre les jeunes des deux sexes, issu de l'Occident. Et selon moi, ces relations sont importantes pour mieux comprendre l'autre sexe afin de choisir son partenaire dans la vie. Les filles sont en effet 58% à croire que la meilleure manière de trouver l'homme de leur vie, c'est de se fréquenter pour mieux se connaître avant de passer par la famille. « Je suis pour », affirme Majid El-deen Khairi, c'est une évolution normale et positive : les jeunes veulent crier à la société de leur rendre le droit d'assumer cette responsabilité. Ils ne veulent pas et ne peuvent pas attendre leur famille pour choisir un partenaire. On devrait donc leur apprendre à être autonomes aussi bien sur le plan affectif que sur le plan financier ».

Dans les témoignages que nous avons recueillis (voir ci-dessous), on voit les résultats du questionnaire, on s'aperçoit que les jeunes d'aujourd'hui sont encore à mi-

chemin entre la contrainte et le choix. Mais déjà ils préfigurent une société où les rapports amoureux avant le mariage seront plus riches et plus responsables. ■

A. M.

Bien souvent, les jeunes préfèrent cacher leurs liaisons amoureuses à leurs parents. La pression sociale et le regard des autres restent encore très forts.

C'est la vie

L'agenda culturel français d'Amman

Exposition

Peintures et dessins du Collège de Nazareth. Une sélection originale des œuvres des élèves, réalisées au cours de l'année sous la direction de leur professeur, le peintre Fouad Mimi. Du 23 au 28 mai.

Cinéma

Cycle consacré à l'actrice Catherine Deneuve. Ma saison préférée, film d'André Téchiné, 1993, couleur. Très liés dans leur enfance, un frère et une sœur se retrouvent après une longue séparation, à l'approche de la mort de leur mère. Lundi 25 mai à 18h30 et 20h30 au CCF (Tél. : 4637009 ou 4636445).



Être ou ne pas être une «brick in the wall»

Classe moyenne, collégiaires, étudiants ou salariés, ils nous parlent d'amour (à leur demande, leurs prénoms ont été modifiés).

Lana, 20 ans :

À l'âge de 14 ans, j'ai rencontré Nabiel à l'église. Il en avait 17. Pendant la semaine on se parlait au téléphone pendant des heures. Ma mère a découvert notre relation et m'a enlevé le téléphone. Elle s'en inquiétait et que j'étais trop jeune. En revanche, sa famille savait et cela ne posait pas de problèmes de son côté. Un an après, il est parti dans un pays arabe pour continuer ses études. On s'écrit beaucoup et pendant les vacances on se rencontre à sortir ensemble et cela m'a causé beaucoup de problèmes avec ma mère. Maintenant Nabiel vient à l'université pour ne voir. Mais tout est changé : Nabiel n'est plus le jeune amoureux de 17 ans. Il est très jaloux : il n'aime pas que je parle avec celui-ci ou rigole avec celui-là. Le comble, c'est quand j'ai appris qu'il interdisait à sa sœur de voir son copain. Cela m'a beaucoup choquée.

Pour Zina, 21 ans, qui n'a encore jamais dit les mots magiques, cela ne vaut pas la peine de s'aimer en catimini. « Je n'ai jamais eu de relation amoureuse avec un homme. Je n'aime pas céder aux émotions. Je ne confie mes sentiments qu'à un homme qui les mérite. Un homme sérieux avec des valeurs et des objectifs de vie. L'homme, qui est prêt à devenir un époux et un père, vient à la maison. Il discute avec mes parents et même s'il n'est pas prêt à se marier mais veut simplement qu'on fasse connaissance, ce n'est pas grave. C'est l'intention qui compte. En rencontrant les parents de la jeune fille et en entrant dans la maison, le garçon dit : « Je suis sérieux, je ne veux pas m'amuser ». Si des

hommes honnêtes, sérieux me demandent ma main, pourquoi suivre des jeunes avec qui je ris de souffrir ou de perdre ma dignité en attendant qu'ils se décident à se marier... Riham, 19 ans, préfère considérer les relations hommes-femmes d'un point de vue religieux :

« Dieu a donné beaucoup de dignité à la femme. Les jeunes doivent respecter la dignité des femmes mais aussi celle des hommes. Personnellement je n'aime pas les règles sociales car elles ne correspondent pas à la volonté de Dieu. L'islam regarde et juge les deux sexes avec les mêmes règles. Mais en raison des traditions, nous sommes amenés à juger différemment les garçons et les filles. J'ai été élevée dans une famille qui n'est pas religieuse mais qui accorde beaucoup d'importance aux traditions et s'inquiète de ce que les gens disent. Pour moi, la religion est la source de mes valeurs qui ne correspondent pas forcément à celles de la société. Ainsi je suis pour conserver ma liberté de choisir. »

Jamal, 23 ans : « Je peux dire que je suis un homme traditionnel, mais je n'ai pas l'intention d'être mesuré par des règles de la même façon que moi. Oui, j'ai connu des filles et j'ai été amoureux mais on ne m'a pas reproché ces relations car je suis un homme. J'avoue que ce n'est pas juste et qu'on a une perception différente des filles qui ne sont pas mariées. Mais qu'y peut-on ? Si je dis à ma sœur, « fais ce que tu veux », est-ce juste ? Je ne veux pas souffrir dans une société obsédée par la réputation de la fille. On est obligé de n'être qu'une «brick in the wall». ■

Propos recueillis par Arine Mango

Échantillon sentimental

Ci-dessous les résultats de notre questionnaire amateur auprès de 160 jeunes de 18 à 28 ans (90 garçons, 70 filles), pour la plupart encore à la recherche de l'âme sœur.

	FILLES	GARÇONS
As-tu déjà fréquenté une personne de l'autre sexe avant le mariage ?	oui = 58% non = 42%	oui = 60% non = 40%
Tes parents toléreraient-ils ta (tes) relation(s) ?	oui = 16% non = 29% Ne savaient pas = 54%	oui = 26% non = 22% Ne savaient pas = 52%
As-tu du respect pour une fille qui sort avec un garçon avant le mariage ?	oui = 78% non = 22%	oui = 61% non = 39%
Quelle est la meilleure façon de trouver la femme de sa vie ?		
1. Se fréquenter et plus tard rencontrer sa famille	58%	50%
2. D'abord rencontrer sa famille et ensuite se fréquenter	26%	11%
3. Rencontrer sa famille puis se connaître dans le cadre familial	16%	39%
Autoriserais-tu ta sœur à fréquenter un garçon ?	oui = 81% non = 65%	oui = 35% non = 65%

D'un cours à l'autre

Architecture

Portzamparc pour un monde pluriel

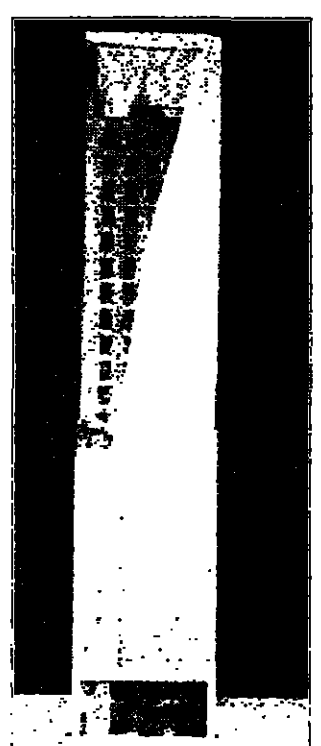
Christian de Portzamparc est un grand nom de l'architecture française d'aujourd'hui. Depuis deux ans, son travail voyage dans le monde grâce à une exposition de photos et de maquettes, conçue à la fois comme un échange culturel et une opération de marketing.

« Cette expo est le résultat d'un travail pédagogique réalisé par les étudiants de l'École Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris où j'enseigne », précise Marc Vayé, architecte, scénographe et créateur de l'exposition. L'accès aux archives leur a permis de mettre en évidence les phases de création d'un projet. Ainsi les croquis exécutés spontanément devant une tasse de café au petit-déjeuner voisinent les aquarelles soignées qui préfigurent en détails l'image finale. Une série de maquettes, blanches, le médium principal de l'architecture, montre aussi les multiples doutes et interrogations de la conception. « L'architecture repose toujours le moment de fixer le projet et le médium jusqu'à la dernière minute », explique Marc Vayé.

Si le travail de conception est une étape complexe qui combine des « manifestations intuitives, des motifs énigmatiques et des éléments d'irrationalité », l'exécution du projet est très rapide. Après avoir testé sur l'ordinateur plusieurs hypothèses en trois dimensions avec simulation du jour et de la nuit, la plus juste se détache des autres et servira de modèle pour le gros œuvre.

Le manteau de Balzac
On découvre également dans l'exposition des collages-photos employés pour donner une image d'ensemble de l'implantation du nouveau bâtiment dans l'environnement qui l'entoure. C'est le cas par exemple de la Tour LVMH de New York qui sera achevée à la fin de l'année.

Premier Français à obtenir le prix Pritzker (l'équivalent du prix Nobel en architecture) en 1994, Christian de Portzamparc est l'auteur d'une nouvelle dialectique spatiale qui rétablit la relation entre l'objet et le territoire, entre le plein et le vide. « Ma maison ce n'est pas les murs, ce n'est pas le toit, ce



Maquette de la Tour LVMH à New York. Elle sera achevée fin 98.

n'est pas le sol, mais le vide entre les choses parce que c'est là que l'habite ». Cette formule qu'il affectionne, l'a amené à renverser l'ordre naturel bâtiments-espaces publics. Dans la rue des Hautes Formes du 3ème arrondissement à Paris, les immeubles ont été construits en définissant d'abord les espaces vides. Dans la même logique, les façades ne sont plus la répétition stricte du premier niveau. Dans ces immeubles collectifs, chaque appartement est différent de son voisin.

Promoteur de « la ville plurielle » et des « territoires contradictoires », l'architecte de l'École de Danse de l'Opéra de Paris annule l'homogénéité formelle des objets, en les fragmentant, pour en retrouver une autre, plus voilée. « Les quatre

niveaux de la Cité de la Musique sont reliés au sol par un plan d'eau et plus haut par un espace de circulation qui invite à une promenade agréable », décrit par exemple Marc Vayé. « C'est une architecture qui se parcourt, poursuit-il, avec la sensation d'être en même temps dedans et autour ».

Un autre exemple de sa diversité architecturale est le projet Nexus World Fukusaku réalisé en 1989 au Japon qui fait coexister deux bâtiments « artificiels et cultivés » avec deux constructions noires appelées simplement « rochers » et une tour de style Renaissance italienne ! Toujours au Japon, le projet Bandai Cultural Complex est, selon les propos du scénographe, « un hommage à la beauté électrique de Tokyo, agrandie ici à l'échelle monumentale ». De nuit, la façade sur rue construite sur le thème du vide cache entre deux surfaces chevauchées (comme le manteau de Balzac sculpté par Rodin), devient un grand signal qui rivalise avec les affiches publicitaires colorées et lumineuses.

Paris, Tokyo, New-York, aujourd'hui la recherche de marchés à l'étranger est vitale pour les architectes européens. « L'architecture est un art mais aussi une industrie qu'on peut exporter, car il n'y a pas d'architecture sans commande », insiste Marc Vayé, « ceux qui travaillent en Chine, en Inde ou au Japon se débrouillent bien ». Avant de poursuivre cette tournée à Thibault et Istanbul, le porte-parole de Portzamparc, qui a apprécié la blanche unité architecturale d'Amman, ne repart pas bredouille : des Saoudiens auraient souhaité rencontrer l'architecte en personne. ■

Anca de Maio

Exposition Christian de Portzamparc à la faculté d'architecture de l'Université de Jordanie jusqu'au 4 juin.

Musique

Zebda, la bonne beurrée d'air frais

Deux concerts à Amman et Irbid et le public à chaque fois électrisé par les rythmes raï, rock, rap du groupe français. Un défoirer, une fête de l'expression libre.

Bing, bing, bing... Sur scène, des lutins sauteurs en action. Mustapha et Hakim bondissent dans tous les sens. Têtes dretus et survêts colorés, on les croirait tout droit sortis d'un conte pour rieurs psychédéliques. Le public suit, captivé par cette énergie inouïe et communicative. Le spectacle, c'est eux : les deux frères Amokrane et leur gymnastique montée sur ressort. Avec Magyd, le leader costaud, ils sont la partie beur (Français d'origine arabe) de ce groupe de sept musiciens né à Toulouse en 1991. Après un premier album à contre-courant sur la Guerre du Golfe, ils se font remarquer en reprenant avec humour les propos démagogiques et teintés de racisme tenus par un Jacques Chirac en campagne, sur les étrangers en France : le Bruit et l'Odour devient leur marque de fabrique. Textes engagés, musique plurielle, optimisme permanent. Attendant la sortie de leur troisième album en août, ils sont en tournée dans une région, après la Syrie et la Jordanie, leur dernier concert est prévu à Tripoli au Liban, qu'ils découvrent pour la première fois. Bing, bing, bing...

Le Jourdain : Il s'agit peu de monde lors de votre premier concert. Et pourtant vous avez réussi à éviter le hide en enflammant l'amphithéâtre des Jardins du Roi Abdallah. Mustapha Amokrane : Nous produisons notre spectacle avec le maximum de sincérité et nous voulons donner du plaisir. Les concerts, nous en avons fait énormément, c'est un domaine que nous maîtrisons. Et puis dans tous les pays, dans l'humain, il y a toujours cette volonté de faire la fête, même si les manières de la faire sont différentes.

Le Jourdain : D'où vous vient cette énergie que vous déployez sur scène ? M. A. : Nous avons un réel plaisir à être sur scène. C'est dans notre nature et dans notre culture aussi, cette culture plurielle franco-arabe. Bien sûr ce n'est pas limitatif mais je veux croire que cela vient de là. Cela tient aussi à la nature de notre spectacle. On peut jouer à Paris, à Alger, à Rome ou à Madrid. Le résultat est le même. Nous voulons que les gens s'éclatent.

Le Jourdain : Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé à faire cette tournée au Moyen-Orient ? M. A. : C'était une période charnière pour nous car notre troisième album va sortir en août prochain. C'était donc un bon moyen d'essayer quelques-unes de nos nouvelles chansons. Deuxièmement nous étions très motivés pour venir dans cette région où aucun groupe de notre type ne s'était produit avant nous. Bien entendu il y avait aussi notre affection pour le monde arabe.

Le Jourdain : Qu'avez-vous découvert en venant ici ? M. A. : Les choses sont moins diluées qu'au Maghreb. L'Algérie, du fait de la proximité avec la France, n'est pas aussi arabe que la Syrie ou la Jordanie. Ici, on découvre la réalité arabe. Nous avons l'impression de retrouver les racines d'une partie de la population française dont nous voulons être représentatifs. Ensuite on se rend compte du décalage complet par rapport à l'image de cette région montrée en France, une image galvaudée par le scoop médiatique et la dramatisation permanente. C'est vrai que c'est un gros bordel politique mais il y a toute la dimension humaine dont on ne parle pas et dont on se rend compte dès les premières minutes passées ici.

En Syrie comme en Jordanie, les gens ne sont pas agressifs. Rien à voir avec l'image de terrorisme qu'on colle sur cette région. Ils ont un sens de l'hospitalité qui a disparu dans les pays occidentaux où règne une paranoïa ambiante. Le Jourdain : Y a-t-il une différence entre votre public en France et celui que vous rencontrez dans votre tournée au Moyen-Orient ? M. A. : Il n'y a pas au niveau du concert. Les gens sont les gens, nas nas. En raison de la barrière de la langue, notre message n'est peut-être pas compris dans tout son développement mais il passe quand même par le jeu de scène, le spectacle. En dehors du concert, en revanche, nous avons parlé avec des gens d'ici et ils ne comprennent pas toujours quand je dis : « Je suis Français ». Ils me disent : « Mais non tu es arabe » ou me demandent encore : « Pourquoi tu ne parles pas l'arabe ? ». De même par rapport à la religion. Ici, ils sont très croyants et tous les jeunes vont à la mosquée ou à l'église alors qu'en France, la religion n'a plus autant d'importance. Nous-mêmes, nous ne sommes pas spécia-



Mustapha (en haut à gauche...) ? : « Être un pont plus qu'un fossé ».

ment pratiquants. Il y a aussi un réel décalage, un malentendu dans le regard que portent les Français sur la civilisation arabe et sur le problème algérien notamment. Les Français ont peur de l'islam. Ce n'est pas simple. Et de notre côté, nous voulons garder cette complexité. L'islam, ce n'est pas seulement l'enfermement de la femme. Entre l'Orient et l'Occident, nous aimerions ainsi être un pont plus qu'un fossé. Le Jourdain : Pourquoi avoir choisi ce nom arabe « zebda » (heure) ? M. A. : On tenait beaucoup à cette consonance arabe dans notre groupe. Ensuite, en France, les jeunes qui comme nous sont de la deuxième génération (nés en France de parents immigrés arabes, NDLR),

on les appelle les heurs. Ce terme vient du verlan (langage utilisé dans les banlieues qui permet de prononcer les mots à l'envers) : ainsi femme devient meuf) du mot arabe, ce qui donne heur. d'où ensuite beur ! Zebda, c'est un jeu de mots sympa qui nous plaît. Enfin, beur c'est aussi une façon de dire qu'on est entre Français et Algériens. Mais on se rend compte qu'il est préférable de dire qu'on est Français. C'est mieux de nos jours.

Le Jourdain : Pourquoi ? M. A. : Parce que nous voulons marquer notre appartenance à la France, avec ses droits et ses devoirs. Or aujourd'hui c'est difficile d'être reconnus en tant que citoyens. Nous voulons aussi marquer l'existence de ce nouveau type de Français que nous sommes, une nouvelle génération en âge de prendre la parole.

Le Jourdain : Vous vous dites journalistes-artistes ? Quelle réalité de la France voulez-vous montrer dans vos chansons ? M. A. : La France multiple, cosmopolite, la France de la République, des Droits de l'Homme, celle qui accepte les étrangers, qui se construit avec d'autres cultures. Cette France-là devra compter avec une population de culture musulmane. C'est nouveau par rapport aux précédentes vagues d'immigration. Nous sommes aussi très engagés politiquement dans nos textes. Nous voulons montrer la réalité de l'exclusion sociale. Pour nous, la problématique de l'intégration culturelle n'existe pas. Un fils d'immigré à partir du moment où il va à l'école, il est intégré. Par contre, l'intégration sociale est difficile. Le chômage est très important et la première population touchée, ce sont les immigrés. On ne peut pas tenir les gens des banlieues responsables de cela. Qu'on les mette en prison quand ils violent est un accord, mais en réalité les responsabilités sont ailleurs. ■

كلمة زهدا

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THE STAR'S WORKSTATION COMPUTING & HIGH TECH NO

Edited by Zeid Nasser

Computer & IT companies!

Welcome to The Star's Workstation, the absolute source on what's hot and what's not in Jordan's IT market. Fax us at 4648298 or email us at Star@NETS.com.jo with your news and views.

Acer incorporates latest technology from Intel: Intel Celeron processor for basic PCs

ACER COMPUTER (Middle East) has announced that its computers will be using the latest technology to roll out of Intel Celeron processors designed for basic PCs.

The Celeron 266 MHz processor is based on the same Pentium II microarchitecture and one of its major advantages to users will be the ease with which the PC can be upgraded to the more powerful and higher speed Pentium II at an affordable price.

The announcement by Acer was made jointly with Intel in Dubai.

Celeron has already been incorporated on the AcerPower 4000—Acer is a mid-range commercial PC—and the first shipment is scheduled for distribution in the Middle East immediately.

"The ability to effectively incorporate the latest technology at the moment it is introduced has undoubtedly helped Acer retain its position as one of the world's leading PC manufacturers," said Adrian Chang, general manager, Acer Computer (Middle East).

"At the same time Acer ensures that this technology is

passed on in a cost-effective and user-friendly way to the consumer."

"Upgrading of Celeron Processor to Pentium II can be done in a matter of seconds through a very simple Processor swap by plugging in Pen-

region were expected by the end of this month.

The TravelMate 7300 series notebook (its predecessor, TravelMate 7100) won the "First Class" Award last December from Mobile Computing & Communications magazine) incorporate high-end technology with specifications that include Pentium II 266 MHz, 4 GB HDD, 64 MB RAM, a 13.3 TFT screen and a Li-ion battery with over 7 hours running time.

"Acer Notebooks are the technology and market leaders in its segment within the Middle East market," said S. Raghu, Product Manager, Notebooks, Acer Computer (Middle East). "When Acer's technology broke the barrier on battery life and introduced for the first time, Notebooks with over 7 hours running time, the market share for the 'Travel-

Mat 7300 TE—was already bundled with this latest innovation and shipments to the

Simultaneously, as Intel announced the availability of Pentium II for notebooks, Acer announced that its flagship notebook product—Travel Mate 7300 TE—was already bundled with this latest innovation and shipments to the

Simultaneously, as Intel announced the availability of Pentium II for notebooks, Acer announced that its flagship notebook product—Travel Mate 7300 TE—was already bundled with this latest innovation and shipments to the

Acer



intel

Flexible, unique training programs arrive in Amman CompuBase to serve Jordan

A VERY prominent computer training company in the Middle East, with fifteen bases in the region, has recently opened in Amman.

CompuBase has gained its reputation through offering flexible training courses which are tailored to meet anyone's needs.

Trainees can select the timing suitable for them, up to 15 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Trainees don't even need to call in to book a training session or call in to cancel it! There are no time limits on the training courses. Trainees can stay in the course, for as long as it takes them to pass it.

Individual training (one-to-one) is offered by Certified Bilingual Educators.

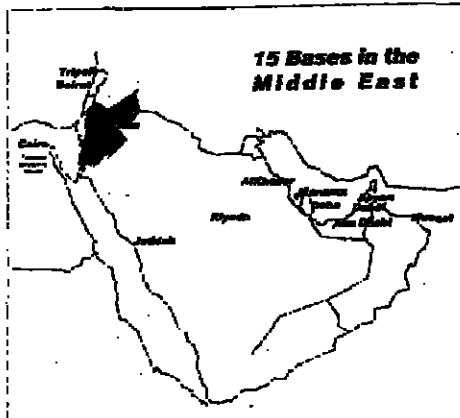
The courses are certified by top vendors like Microsoft, Compaq and others. Original courseware—learning materials—are used, which distinguishes CompuBase even further. Across the Middle East, in countries like Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, CompuBase has trained thousands and thousands of satisfied customers.

The most popular CompuBase "flexible training system

courses" are:

Complete Introduction to Computers & Software, Mastering Microsoft Windows 95/98 or Windows NT Workstation 4.0, Mastering Word-processing at work (Microsoft Word 97), Mastering Spreadsheet for business (Microsoft Excel 97), Mastering Power Presentations (Microsoft PowerPoint 97), Mastering Databases (Microsoft Access 97 user level).

CompuBase is a Microsoft Authorized Technical Education Center, a Microsoft Certified Solution Provider, a Compaq Authorized Training Center, an AutoDesk Training Center and a Novell Education Authorized Center. A free Internet course is offered to all train-



Special rates are offered to groups. For more information, contact CompuBase International Jordan, at telephone 5601150, fax 5601510 or email chbase@no.com.jo.

The Star's WorkStation apologizes to its readers for incorrectly reporting last week that "CompuWare comes to Amman", when the story headline should have read "CompuBase comes to Amman".

COMPUBASE

Windows CE will rule

WINDOWS CE could be the future operating system, for everyone else! It seems to have made in-roads in all industries that incorporate "intelligent digital devices". These include palm PCs, handhelds, Web TVs, information systems fitted in cars and planes, among many other units.

Understanding this massive potential, Microsoft is conducting a no-holds-barred effort to push its operating systems, starting with a focus on the Palm PC market.

Large manufacturers who have already announced support for Windows CE include Siemens, Ericsson, Philips and others.

Also, automobile manufacturers are going to utilize Win-

dows CE as the basis for entertainment and information systems in cars.

There are some 600,000 palm PCs in use. It is not known exactly how many utilize Windows CE. But if this figure is anything to go by, and judging by the fact that the palm PC market is yet to explode, Windows CE could sell around 2.5 million copies in 1998.

This is good news for Microsoft which is investing heavily in the Windows CE platform, following four years of continuous development.

What's more, the new release, Windows CE 3.0, should be easily integrated with the Web TV platform that Microsoft has planned.

INTERFACE BY ZEID NASSER

The state of Jordanian software Winners & Losers

JORDANIAN COMPUTER software developers have had mixed fortunes over the past few years.

In the early nineties, it seemed that software development would be a major export industry for Jordan; today, it has turned out to be, to some extent, an export industry but on a much smaller scale than anticipated.

Why? Well, the problem doesn't lie in the innovation of Jordanian developers, or in their technical skills. The problem lies solely in the lack of organization, administrative skills and marketing capabilities.

It's not enough to create a wonderful piece of software, it is essential to be able to market it. Creating an effective distribution channel in countries like Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other Gulf States is very important and not an easy task!

Also, a software development operation cannot be managed by amateurs. Developers must take on full financial and administrative responsibilities. For this reason, many ambitious software projects in Jordan end up bankrupt or simply cease to exist.

Of course, there are those who can be clearly classified as winners! These companies have mature structures, and enjoy large, talented development teams. Examples include ProgressSoft, SEDCO, IdealSoft, ComSoft among others. All of these companies produce business software solutions which are currently in use in countries ranging from as far as West Africa all the way to the Near East.

Some have sought a strong presence in neighboring countries (SEDCO's headquarters, for example, recently moved to Dubai) while others have specialized in taking on contract software solutions from foreign software giants who require talented programmers to perform so-called "coding". It so happens that Jordan provides an option for such large international companies. Software houses like IdealSoft and Zeine Technological Applications have succeeded in this field.

As for end-user, educational and leisure software, the only example of success worth sighting is Turath Center for Research which produces Islamic software, including interpretations of the Holy Qur'an and collections of the Prophet's tradition (hadith).

In any case, the picture isn't gloomy, and many lessons have been learned. The Middle Eastern software industry is a competitive one. Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia all boast amazing talents in Arabic software development. Jordan, similarly, has much to offer.

Whether or not we can capitalize on the current stock of talent depends on one important factor that is still missing: better management and marketing. ■

Pentium 450MHz: What on earth is going on!

INTEL RECENTLY shipped its 400MHz and 450MHz Pentium processors! It must have come as a shock to most computer vendors, who have just incorporated the Pentium 300MHz into their latest desktop machines.

What's more, users may be upset to find that Intel has cut the prices of its 266 and 300 MHz processors—the 266 MHz processor has been cut by \$200. So, a PC you bought for \$1,200 last week, should sell for only \$1,000 by next week!

This dizzying level of developments is leaving us all—users and computer suppliers—completely breathless. What's the point? Do we really need all this processing power this fast? Intel needs to think about that. ■

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Dana: A dream at the edge of the Kingdom

Article and photos by
Yannick Laine
Star Staff Writer

DON'T EXPECT to see ibex or Arabian gazelles if you decide to trek around in Wadi Dana. Despite the well-done boards which give you detailed information about all of the fauna in the reserve—for example, the 33 types of snakes—you may meet only a small blue lizard running into a crack in the rocks, or some raptors flying in big circles above your head.

That's if you're lucky.

But so what? Dana's attractions aren't limited to its wildlife, who indeed must hide to stay wild, and if seen, be hard to approach. You understand what Wadi Dana is really all about only when

you get your first glimpse of it from one of the entrances to the reserve.

The spectacle before your eyes is fantastic. More than 350 square kilometers of



sharp peaks, with vertiginous canyons carved over millennia, by water. In the background, the wide Wadi Araba extending from Dead Sea to Red Sea appears in an otherworldly fusion of milky mist and yellow sand.

After toting along your hik-

ing shoes, reaching the camp site and pitching your tent, you have a choice of several different excursions. One of the most thrilling trips, if you have not much time but want to enjoy Dana, is the trek to the Bedouin village, approximately seven kilometers from the camp. The round-trip hike requires only about seven hours—mostly easy walking along the side of the mountains.

The trail is sheltered from the high sun thanks to the shadows of pines, oaks, olive and juniper trees, which all could become places for a picnic. Wheat rustles in the wind, thistle crackles under your feet and you quickly reach the old village, a paradise in a deep green, watery jewel case. The quietness of the area is relaxing, to say the least, although occasionally disturbed by explosions from the nearby sand pit.

You go through orchards and meet families and white horses resting on the grass. All this astonishing luxury comes not only from irrigation but also from the climate of the reserve, which changes in stages, according to the altitude. From 400 below to 1600 meters above sea level, the landscape changes from dry desert to Mediterranean flora to high dry mountains. Moreover the different effects of sunlight at different times of the day constantly transform your perception of these natural scenes.

On the return trip, you discover many things you didn't notice the first time through. Like the way the rounded hills, from certain angles, resemble human shapes. Back in the camp site, a guy explains that the north and south winds meet each other in this area, mixing in an upwardly spiraling wind tunnel which then shapes the rocks. This natural phenomenon also helps birds attain high altitudes and reach North Africa almost effortlessly.

The night is clear, and under a full moon, only noisy crickets disturb your dream of being like a milan flying over the Dana kingdom. ■



After the great success of the Radisson SAS Resort Aqaba where all the audience were spellbound by his performance, pianist Daniel Aalberg moves into the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman for live entertainment of the Wings Club Piano Bar. Daniel who is 23 years performs Rock 'n' Roll, Gospel, Blues, and Ballades in passion and charm. Come and get yourself enchanted with his performance, and enjoy the aviation atmosphere of the Wings Club from 7 pm until midnight.

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